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NEWSZINE

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With Great Power

Campaign Construction, Part 3: "*That* can't be good."

by Dale A. Donovan

You might not consider horror and super heroes to be topics that go hand-in-hand. However, some of the best comics of recent years have used, and in a few cases reinvented, many conventions of the horror genre. DC Comics' *Swamp Thing* has been the best-written horror comic at several points in its history, and DC's *Sandman* comic is the book I look forward to reading most every month.

Marvel Comics, with the success of their *Ghost Rider* comic, has gotten into horror books in a big way in 1992 with monthly titles such as *Spirits of Vengeance, Morbius, Darkhold,* and *Nightstalkers.*

As the books above (among other sources) have inspired me, I hope the suggestions below will inspire you as a super-hero game GM and I hope you frighten the tights right off your PC heroes.

Undermine PC Confidence

Super heroes are pretty confident people in general. They know they're stronger, faster, tougher, or smarter than almost any other beings they encounter. Therefore, the key to adding a touch of horror to your super-hero game is to strip that confidence away. A few ways to do this are:

Warp the familiar: Has the electricity in your home ever gone out during a nasty, window-rattling-loud thunderstorm? It's really amazing how much comfort you can derive from a 60-watt light bulb. Little else is as scary as when a common item, trusted ally, or any familiar element of your life unexpectedly fails you.

For super heroes, these elements include technical equipment, weapons, vehicles, NPC allies (friends and foes), the setting in which the heroes operate, or the heroes themselves.

Imagine during a game Captain America takes a blast from an unknown alien's weapon. Cap blocks the blast with his shield, only to discover it has cracked from the energy discharged by the weapon. While this setback would not terrify Cap, it probably would shake up Cap's player.

Perhaps an NPC friend or heroic ally suddenly begins behaving in an aberrant manner. Slowly, everyone around the PCs begins to behave this way—except for the heroes themselves.

The heroes' means of long-distance communication (Avengers cards, throat-mikes and ear-jacks, telepathic ear-plugs, etc.), which have always worked perfectly well, begins to function improperly or not at all. And, what if the PC heroes don't notice this until after they decide to split up to search Castle Doom?

Possibly the scariest thing to have happen to a super hero is to have his own super powers begin to fail him. Most heroes are defined by their powers, so what will the PCs do when they can't even trust the abilities that make them super? Remember, without their powers, your heroes are just like everybody else—potential victims.

Being out of control: Have you ever driven over a wet or icy patch of road and, even for a fraction of a second, lost control of your vehicle? Aside from the fear of accident or injury, wasn't it scary to realize you were not in control of your situation at that time?

The same feeling can occur deep in players' hearts when you seize control of the role-playing situation. Rather than just have their super powers fail as mentioned above, you can contrive a reason for them to act erratically, unpredictably. Should your lightning-throwing hero dare toss a bolt at a fleeing mugger if he isn't sure he can control the voltage?

Another way to take the initiative away from your heroes is to keep them off-balance. Don't give the heroes (or the players) a chance to collect their thoughts or catch their breaths. Don't give them a chance to discuss the deeper meaning behind the villain's cryptic comment as he teleported away. Collapse the ceiling on them instead. Then have the place enter self-destruct mode. Next, make your heroes rescue the villain's prisoners before the place goes sky high, etc. Keep forcing them to make quick decisions. Chase scenes are a great way to lead your PC heroes down a primrose path you have laced with proverbial anti-hero land mines.

Trapped!

Have you ever had a nightmare where you were somehow trapped? No matter what you did, you could not escape. Why not subject your PC heroes to similar entrapment ordeals?

The super-villain death-trap is a cliche of the genre, but orchestrated properly they can be terrifying. Good examples of death-traps aren't too hard to find in the comics, but the Marvel master of such devices is Victor Von Doom. Check out the *Lands of DR. DOOM* boxed set for inspiration.

Inventive GMs can also relocate their campaign's setting as a way to make their players feel out of their depth. Have a villain send them through a space-time portal to an alternate dimension or alien world—with no obvious means of getting back home, of course.

A more philosophical type of entrapment is to offer the PCs a limited number of options, none of which the heroes would willingly choose under different circumstances. This is a play on the "lesser of two (or more) evils" cliche. Should your heroes try to run the gauntlet of Doombots set up by the good Doctor, or try to get past Magneto and his Acolytes, or attempt to prevent the Juggernaut from walking through (literally) the ground floor of that 100-story skyscraper?

Deception

Ever visited a really good haunted house at Halloween? One of the ways the people who put these together scare you is by deceiving you into believing that this "house" is normal (e.g., not filled with fake blood, rubber masks, spray-on spider webs, etc.). Deception is a horror (or in this case, super-horror) GM's best friend. Let me fill you in on one recent use of deception in a game.

As I write this, I'm running a super-hero adventure once a week. The adventure we're in the middle of now involves the heroes trying to find the missing daughter of a noble count who just happens to live in a gothic castle on a cliff overlooking the sea. The heroes have discerned that the young girl was

Continued on page 31

About the Cover

Artist Jeff Easley penned this vision of terror from every dungeoneer's nightmares.

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NEWSZINE

Volume 12, Number 10
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SPECIAL FEATURE

8 **The Valley of Death – by William Tracy with Erlene Mooney**
Fear and danger lurk in every corner of an ancient crypt, but riches await the cool headed and stout hearted in this old-fashioned dungeon crawl.

FEATURES

6 **Babette**
Issue #70's sword contest produced some results that—well—have to be seen to be believed.

21 **Monsters**
Meet the ghost dragon, scavenger spirit, grave watcher, and bloodstone zombie. The latter three denizens of the night were entries in the club monster design competition, which was part of the 1992 Games Decathlon.

29 **The Living City – by David Carl Argall**
Find out why Ravens Bluff's city treasury could become a bone of contention—and a swinging bachelor pad.

EDITORIAL

4 **Notes From HQ – by Jean Rabe**
Why some recent tournaments have become "pointless," some contest winners, and a brand new contest.

5 **Letters – by the members**

DEPARTMENTS

2 **With Great Power – by Dale Donovan**
How to build horrific chills and thrills into your super hero campaign.

20 **Into The Dark – by James Lowder**
There's frost on the pumpkins and danger lurking around every corner in these halloween-style horror flicks.

25 **The Living Galaxy – by Roger Moore**
When are science fiction characters safe and sound? Only the GM will know for sure if you use these techniques for adventure design.

Notes From HQ

Pointless Tournaments And Fun Contests

Every year thousands of Network members play Network-sanctioned tournaments.

Members who participate are awarded points toward their player rankings. And members who judge events are given points toward their judge rankings. The more points you earn, the higher level you achieve. However, we can't award the points if we do not receive the paperwork.

The Network has been receiving some convention paperwork too late. For example, the paperwork for the Contrary convention on the U.S. east coast came in nine months after the convention.

We're exploring some possibilities to get tournament organizers to return paperwork in a timely fashion. For example, we will try running boxed text on the Convention Announcements page (or somewhere else in the Newszine where we can find space) which lists what conventions have returned paperwork.

There's also something you can do. Please remind the convention staff that they must return the tournament paperwork so you can get credit for playing in or judging events. And if you are a member of the convention staff and you know who is responsible for the tournament paperwork, make sure that person returns the material to us.

We like to receive tournament results within a couple of weeks of a convention. A few conventions this year have waited as long as two months to return the results, and—while we were able to put all of these results in—Char had to scramble and push back working on other convention tournaments.

Let's all work together to get results in quickly so people get the points they deserve.

Happy Birthday Fluffy

The birthday cards we received in our card contest were fun, frivolous, and showed Fluffy that you cared.

Our first place winner is Tali Evans from Phoenix, AZ. The card, with an artful rendition of Fluffy, and our canny canine's name spelled out in bones, reads:

After all that you've been through
The ups, the downs
When you've been stuck in the goo
Let's not beat around the bush
Because you're such a pearl
I'm gonna say it. . .
Happy Birthday Girl!
Love ya, Fluffy!

Tali received a copy of the AL-QADIM™ realm rules and a one-year membership extension.

Second place went to Douglas Burke of Boyd, KY, and third place went to John Cereso of Dunkirk, NJ. Both of these caring individuals receive one-year membership extensions.

The winner of our **Fluffy Trivia Contest** is Michael Parks of Lafayette, IN. Michael got the most correct answers. Congratulations, Michael. You receive a one-year membership extension.

This Issue's Contest

Well, we're really in a contest mood right now, and we have so many to choose from thanks to our Contest Contest entries.

This time we offer an **Artifact History Contest** supplied by Edwin Charles Jensen of Rifle, CO. He receives a trilogy of paperbacks for his fine challenge. His contest reads:

The Rules: Write the history of an artifact, a description of the artifact, major events, major people who used the artifact and how it effected the world. We really don't want to know all of its powers, just the story behind it. Suggest adventure ideas and how the artifact might be adapted to campaigns or adventures. Artifacts will be judged on originality, playability and presentation.

Entries must be typed (one side of the page only), double-spaced, on plain white paper. Put your name and membership number at the top of the first page and your name at the top of each subsequent page. Send no more than three pages please. You may submit multiple entries, but each entry must be accompanied by a separate **standard disclosure form.** You can get a form by writing to Network HQ. Deadline is January 15th, 1993.

Sample: *Delmur's Wand of Delusion,* as told by Hailmen Scriptor of the Frostmoor Empire. "History has it that this wand is made of polished blackwood with a heavy golden ring binding either end. Several gems are set into the gold rings and may have something to do with its powers. Many a person has carried it, not knowing the full extent of its powers, and found some untimely demise. Most of those who wielded it fell, either to its curses, or to the fatal greed of someone else who wanted it.

"The wand was first recorded in the Callatian Empire 1,500 years ago. It was said to have been wielded by a notorious wizard called Dralenton. Legend has it that Dralenton used the wand to seize control of the empire by controlling the emperor himself. Once the plot was uncovered, a revolt took place, and several heirs and other powerful figures of the empire struggled to retake the throne. Dralenton, the emperor and most of the heirs to the throne were killed. The ensuing battle for power shattered the empire, dividing it into warring sections that left little but rubble behind.

"The wand seems to resurface, as it did in Virlattis 800 years ago, to bring about the catastrophic fall of an empire. Blumagen wielded the wand in Virlattis, presumably in defense of the empire. Yet the evil nature of the wand consumed him, and his lust for power could not be filled. Blumagen still had enough loyalty to the King of Virlattis not to wield the wand against him, but he could not let the wand go. I would guess that its powers would not let him part with it.

"Although many a bold adventurer has searched for the artifact, none has found it. I pray that things continue this way, for it would mean ill if the wand were found. Were it to resurface in my time, I would do all in my power to destroy it."

Well, that's it. Edwin has created a great example and a challenging contest. Get to work. Nifty prizes await the winners.

Take Care,

Jean

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Letters

High Level Adventurers & Joe

I just received issue #73 and was stirred by many of the things I read therein. Mr. Anderson's letter is both correct and incorrect. Ravens Bluff, or any fantasy city for that matter, is not going to be a mercantile retirement home for wayward adventurers. The city's merchants are by-and-large going to be 0-level craftsmen who learned the trade through apprenticeship and then scrimped and saved to open their own shop. Or perhaps they took over their master's shop when he retired.

In my opinion, many common businesses would not be run by adventurers. This is not to say, however, that certain curio shops or specialty stores couldn't be owned by adventurers. But these same stores could certainly (and should) be managed by knowledgeable merchants who have experience with such (10th level shopkeeper anyone?).

I, too, find trap designing a tedious and necessarily thankless job. Players often gripe and complain that there was no way to avoid a trap or say "that wasn't there the last time!" My advice for DMs is to provide clues concerning the trap: splinters of wood, dark stains on the floor, shards of glass, etc.

Another item of interest, Ryan McRae's article on the Game Fair answered many questions I had about attending. This is my first Game Fair, and I had no earthly idea of what to expect.

That's all for now. You have a wonderful club, and I adore the POLYHEDRON® Newszine. Thanks to all those staffers at HQ that keep those of us on the fringes well informed.

Tom Allen
Ft. Worth, TX

Thanks for the kind words, Tom. Many of the Living City submissions we have been receiving detail shops run by former adventurers. We're not opposed to running shops by 0-level characters. We simply get very few of them. (That's a hint that we'd like to see more.) This issue's Living City submission is a little bit different. We got a kick out of it, and we hope you like it, too.

I have just returned from Glathricon 1992. While at the convention the gamers and the gaming was tremendous.

At the conclusion of the convention I was bestowed the Joe Martin Award for Outstanding Gaming. With my heart racing I accepted this great honor, but failed to express myself adequately.

After many thanks, handshakes and hugs, I spoke to Linda Bingle (a previous winner). I told her my hands were still shaking and I was still dumbfounded. She promised that sometime that evening the anxiety would pass.

While driving home I was thinking of the award and its significance came over me. As I drove the tears started to well up in my eyes. I wished to tell all how thankful I was to receive this award.

I am honored beyond words to receive and join the representatives of the Joe Martin Award for Outstanding Gaming. I will cherish this award always and never forget why it is given. Though I never met Joe Martin, the people who knew him were deeply touched by his gaming spirit. As long as there are gamers, this spirit will live in each one of us. Thank You.

That is what I wished to say but failed to find the words on the stage. Don, your speech was wonderful. I hope to be so admirable when it is my turn. To the Joe Martin committee and everyone at Glathricon, I give you my sincerest thanks.

Marshall Simpson
Ohio

Editor's Note: The Joe Martin Award for Outstanding Gaming is an annual award presented at Glathricon in Evansville, IN. Glathricon was the first convention to hold a Network benefit tournament. The tournament honors Joe Martin, a Network member who died of cancer.

Joe was someone very special. He worked hard in every game he played in or ran to make sure every person at his table had a good time. He promoted gaming to the general public and always had time to encourage new players. That's what the Joe Martin Award for Outstanding Gaming is about. The award recognizes gamers who share Joe's spirit.

We at Network HQ encourage other conventions and gaming groups to adopt similar awards.

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Babette

A Sword By Any Other Name Would Still Be Sharp

We received many entries, serious and silly, for our sword contest presented in issue #70. The object was to detail the magic sword wielded by the beauteous barbarian on the cover. Here is a sampling of some of the submissions. We are sharing these with you, but we *take no responsibility* if any of these items show up in your campaigns. The authors below receive a two-month membership extension. The grand prize winner receives an assortment of modules.

Most of the entries called the sword "Babette," and the staff spent several sleepless nights trying to figure out why so many people would call the sword the same thing. Silly us! The scabbard says Babette. Of course, it took us a while to notice that. Artist Clyde Caldwell told us he put the word on the scabbard to honor his fiance, who modeled for the picture. So, to set the record straight, the woman—not the sword—is named Babette.

Female Warrior's Sword

by Dan Brown, Findlay, OH

This is a special *dragon-slaying long sword.* She is intelligent (Int 15, Ego 10) and chaotic good. She is able to communicate verbally in Common, Dwarven and the languages of all good dragons. Created to slay evil dragons, she is +1 vs. all opponents, but is +3 vs. evil dragons. She does double damage to green and blue dragons, can detect all dragons in a 150′ radius, bestows a +2 bonus to her wielder's saving throw vs. dragon breath, and gives her wielder a +4 Charisma bonus with respect to dragonkind.

The Sword of Babette Maelstrom

by Erik Yamahata, Simi Valley, CA

Long sword +5, +10 vs. regenerating creatures, +15 vs. dragons. Once per year, the sword can: cause an explosion, 200′ radius, 200d100 (200-20,000) points of damage; create a *sphere of force,* as per the *wall of force* spell; and *dispel* magic at 45th level.

Bloodletter

by Glenn Coulter, Plymouth, OH

Chaotic neutral *long sword +3* (Int 17, Ego 16). Its primary abilities are: *detect reptiles* in a 30′ radius, *detect magic* in a 10′ radius and *detect invisibility* in a 10′ radius. Its extraordinary power: wounds from Bloodletter will continue to bleed, causing an additional 5 points of damage each round until the victim is magically healed. Its special purpose is to slay reptiles or anything resembling a reptile (the sword can't tell the difference). On a natural roll of 17 to 20 a reptile is automatically decapitated. Against dragons, the sword does triple damage. The sword speaks Common, Orcish and Elvish.

Undead Slayer

by Steve Townsend, Enon, OH

Long sword +2, +5 vs. undead and necromancers. Special powers: bestows upon its wielder a +2 saving throw bonus vs. undead attacks and necromantic spells. In addition, once a week the sword can summon a valkyrie.

Blue Dragon Bane

by Jason Walker, Simi Valley, CA

This finely crafted artifact is a *long sword +4, +5 vs. blue dragons.* The sword gives its wielder several benefits: invulnerability to lightning-based attacks and the ability to cast a *globe of invulnerability* and *heal* each once a day. Each time the wielder slays a blue dragon, the sword casts *longevity* on the wielder, as per the potion. The scabbard is magic. Should the sword ever be lost, the wielder can reclaim the weapon by grasping the scabbard and willing the blade to return.

Monster Slayer

by Robert McGraw, Evansville, IN

Bastard sword +5 (Int 15, Ego 14), lawful good. Primary abilities: *detect magic* 10′ radius, *detect sloping passages* 10′ radius and *detect traps* in a 10′ radius. Special power: paralyzes victims for 1-4 rounds (unless they save vs. paralyzation). Special purpose: slay non-human monsters. The sword fluently speaks Common.

Scale Cleaver

by Dean Martino, Ghent, NY

This weapon appears as a skillfully-crafted long sword with intertwining symbols from the language of a rare race of marsh-dwelling elves from the jungles of Chult. Those able to decipher the symbols can tell that the blade was crafted to aid the elves in their years-long struggle against the lizard men.

Against beings with a natural scaly covering, such as lizards, snakes, dragons, fish, etc., the weapon is a *long sword +5.* In addition, it will grant its wielder its full magical bonus against foes clad in armor made of natural scales. Against all other opponents, the sword is +1.

Draxalon, Defender of Feminine Virtue

by Thuong Pham, Costa Mesa, CA

Draxalon is a *long sword +3* that allows its female wielder to cast *haste* upon herself once per day. The sword will not permit itself to be used by a male; those trying will discover they cannot lift the blade.

Draxalon was created 200 years ago by the wizard Eriel for her sister, the fighter Diana. Diana wielded it for many years before she disappeared while adventuring in the ruins of Myth Drannor.

The Seventh Blade

by Roger Smith, Lincoln, United Kingdom

In the hands of a woman who has a Charisma of at least 13, this fine blade operates as a *long sword, +1 flame tongue.* The sword can, at will, *detect evil, detect magic* and *detect invisible* with a 30′ radius. Its extraordinary powers, which can be used twice a day, are *X-ray vision* and *ESP.* The scabbard functions as a *rod of victory.* Neither the sword nor scabbard will function for a male or for a woman who has a Charisma of 12 or less.

Grinthane

by Matthew Hurd, Utica, NY

This is a *long sword +5 defender,* which has a finely-carved jade pommel. The Elvish runes along the blade say, "For the Green Heart," hinting at its special purpose to slay green dragons.

In the hands of an elf, the blade is +5 to hit—it also confers a +5 bonus to armor class. It grants its wielder a +5 saving throw bonus against green dragon breath. Its other abilities are: *detect*

green dragons in a 1-mile radius, *detect precious metals* in a 120′ radius and *detect gems* in a 120′ radius.

It speaks Elvish, Common and Green Dragon.

In the hands of all other creatures, it functions as a normal long sword.

Grinthane enjoys verbally abusing its victims, especially if those victims are green dragons. Immediately upon sight of a green dragon the sword will begin yelling insults in the green dragon tongue.

Sword of Luck

by Tom Allen, Ft. Worth, TX

This elven long sword is a *luck blade* that at one time held four wishes. Now the steel is colder and only a single wish remains. On the sword's pommel is engraved a face which emits dull, haunting moans in battle. All opponents hearing the moaning must save vs. spell or flee in fear for 2-5 turns.

WyrmCleaver

by Justin Somma, Brooklyn, NY

This magical blade is a *vorpal long sword +4* with respect to all dragons. Against any other foes, the sword is +2, with no special abilities.

Life Saver

by Thomas Knoedler, Springfield, IL

A neutral good *long sword +2*, a *life saver* blade continuously *detects evil* and *detects undead* within a 30′ radius. When the weapon is drawn, it grants its wielder immunity to all energy-draining attacks. Once a week, the sword can emit a *sunburst.*

Naesowen, the Ghost Blade

by Sean O. Murphy, Moore, OK

Naesowen was forged in the Tower of Ergoth by the power of Black Robe wizards during the days when they were hunted after the Cataclysm. The wizards summoned and trapped an evil spirit within the blade to give it strength and added powers. Naesowen is a lawful evil *long sword +1, +2 vs. magic using and enchanted beings.* At will, it *detects magic, detects invisibility, detects lies* and casts *know alignment.* Three times a week, the sword can cast an *anti-magic shell.* In addition, when wielded against wizards of the White Robe, it can cause *confusion* for 2d6 rounds.

The sword speaks verbally and telepathically Common and Ancient Common. It can read those languages, and *read magic* as well.

Sword of Underwear Snatching

by Lev Osherovich, Walnut Creek, CA

This is a rare and powerful *sword of underwear snatching.* If you look closely, it seems the sword wielder on POLYHEDRON® Newszine #70 isn't wearing any. Talk about chain mail teddy stereotypes!

Dragonslayer

by Tobin Jarvis, Georgetown, DE

There are as many varieties to this sword as there are dragons. These weapons deal out 3d12 points of damage against dragons, and 1d10 points of damage to all other creatures. Each is treated as a *long sword +2, +4* vs. a particular type of dragon. For example, a blue sword would be +4 to hit and damage blue dragons.

In addition, each sword has an alignment, and that sword will not strike dragons of the same alignment. For example, if a red sword had a lawful good alignment, it would not strike gold dragons.

Corthalis

by Steve Re, Enumclaw, WA

Corthalis is a brilliant, silver-bladed *long sword +2.* However, in the hands of a woman with a Charisma of 17 or more, it is +5. The neutral good blade can speak Common, Elvish, Dwarvish and Orcish. However, it prefers only to speak to beautiful women.

The sword's special abilities become known only to women who wield it. Twice a day the sword can shoot lightning equal to a *lightning bolt* spell cast at 9th level. In addition, the sword can *detect evil* and *detect lies* each four times a day.

Evil WyrmSlayer

by Philip Sullivan, Brockton, MA

This *long sword +2, +5 vs. evil male dragons* makes its wielder immune to the effects of dragons' *fear* aura. It confers a +5 bonus to all saving throws against the breath of evil dragons.

Grounder's Blade

by Mark L. Junk, Mequon, WI

This sword does not provide any bonuses to hit or damage, however, it does have defensive capabilities. Whoever is in possession of the *Grounder's Blade* gets a +3 bonus to saving throws vs. electrical attacks. Those who save suffer no damage; failure results in taking half damage.

A special property of the sword is its weapon within a weapon. By speaking the command word and pulling on the hilt, a 4″ crystal dagger emerges. This weapon causes the normal 1d4 damage of a dagger. However, each time its wielder successfully strikes with it, the blade also causes an additional 3d4 points of electrical damage. When the dagger is slipped back into the *grounder's blade,* the two weapons merge again.

Serpent Slicer

by Paul Sykes, Raymond, ME

A *serpent slicer* is made of a dull, gray metal with a caduceus engraved on it near the hilt. It has a steel hilt guard with a ruby embedded in it. The serviceable hilt is of plain leather with a well-used look to it. These swords are always found in a sheath of dragon hide, as the sword prefers to be embedded in dragon flesh.

Serpent slicers are *long swords +1, +3 vs. dragons.* The pommel glows in the presence of any dragon. The sword bestows upon its wielder the ability to speak with any dragon.

Grand Prize Winner

Starfall

by Steve Kydd, Stratford, Ontario, Canada

Starfall is an exquisite long sword that was forged from the heart of a meteorite by an ancient elven weaponsmith who had more than two centuries of experience in his trade.

The blade is long and slender, with remarkable balance and an exceptionally keen edge. This gives Starfall a +3 bonus to strike opponents in leather, padded or hide armors and a +2 bonus against opponents in metal armors. Its deadly edge delivers an additional 3 points of damage per hit. The unusual metal in the blade reacts violently when it comes in contact with the blood of a dragon, causing an additional 3d4 points of damage when used against dragonkind.

The strange and alien metal never dulls or corrodes and receives a +5 bonus on saving throws. It is immune to attacks from rust monsters.

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The Valley of Death

by William Tracy with Erlene Mooney

A harrowing AD&D® game adventure for six characters, levels 8-10

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

Players' Introduction

For many years the small, peaceful kingdom of Beleus has prospered. But recently a dark cloud of fear has settled heavily over the land.

Rumors have spread throughout the kingdom that a Master of the Undead has descended into the Valley of Death, an ancient place steeped in history.

Many centuries ago, before the birth of the kingdom of Beleus, the area was the center of the mighty Empire of Thanus. A graveyard was set up for royalty and other important personages of the empire, and this graveyard was placed in the Valley of Death, a dismal cleft surrounded by the Duskus Mountains. The valley could be reached only by a pass that wound through the mountains. The dead taken there were placed in ornate marble crypts.

The Empire of Thanus was a warlike country, ever in conflict with its neighbors and ever victorious—until they encountered a well-trained army from the nearby city of Beleus. Through careful military maneuvers, the Beleus people moved their forces through the Valley of Death, surprising and defeating the Empire of Thanus, and claiming the land as their own.

After the empire crumbled the valley was shunned, more because it was a place of Thanus than because it was a place of the dead. Beleus expanded over the former Thanus land, and Beleus officials occupied the Thanus manor houses.

The Beleus Empire prospered and was at peace with neighboring cities and countries. The decades passed quietly. The stories of the Thanus Empire and the strategic maneuver through the Valley of Death became dim memories—until recently when a merchant caravan moving through the mountains near the valley was raided and had its goods destroyed by a band of undead. Rumors sprang up of a Death Master who now controls the Valley of Death.

King Andros of Beleus has offered a reward of 50,000 gold pieces to those who can determine if someone is controlling the undead, and to put a stop to the threat in any case. Many have tried for the reward; none have succeeded.

Now it is your turn. If you end the threat, whatever the threat is, your group will be 50,000 gold pieces richer.

Notes for the Dungeon Master

There is indeed a "Death Master" in the Valley of Death. He is a drow lich who used to be the court mage in the Thanus Empire. When the Thanus Empire was flourishing, the drow, called L'rac Darkray, enjoyed unmatched wealth and power. However, the drow was forced to flee the empire when the Beleus army started to overrun the Thanus forces.

Centuries passed, and as the drow neared death he undertook the arcane process to become a lich, vowing to mastermind the destruction of Beleus.

In life, he was the real power behind the Thanus throne. He wants that power again. His plan is to frighten away as many Beleus citizens as possible with the rumors of walking dead. Then, L'rac believes he will have a lesser force of citizens to contend with, one that his undead minions can trample. L'rac has been gathering the undead and other "supporters" and is making plans to move on the outlying Beleus villages. L'rac has been taking his time with his plans, confident that nothing stands in his way and enjoying the battle calculations too much to make them go quickly.

Among his supporters are two duergar vampires, who L'rac encountered in his journeys as a lich. He "persuaded" them to join him in the Valley of Death. The lich also has a handful of drow to aid him in his plans.

The vampires recognize a chance for increased power and wealth if Beleus falls, but they do not like the company of the drow lich. As the lich plots to take over Beleus, the vampires plot to defeat L'rac and place minions of their own under their domination.

Encounter A: Drow in Orc Clothing

The party has no difficulty locating the ancient road to the graveyard. The road snakes through craggy terrain in a series of hairpin turns, rising and falling to take the path of least resistance. Thickly forested slopes rise above one side of the road and fall away on the other; the road's up slope and down slope sides constantly change as the road twists and turns.

This encounter occurs on the party's second night out, toward the end of the PCs' last watch, just an hour or so before the sun will come up. The drow prefer to move around at night.

A six-member drow force has been told to patrol the mountains to make sure no more adventurers from Beleus wander by. The duergar vampires interrogated a few low-level adventurers caught by an orc company and learned about the 50,000 gold piece reward being offered for stopping the undead menace. So as an extra precaution, L'rac assigned these six drow to be on the lookout for armed adventurers, to infiltrate any adventuring groups they came across, and to defeat them from within.

The drow are posing as a band of adventurers whose illusionist has made them all look like orcs. The "adventurers" claim they saw a large force of orcs walking through the mountains and figured they would be safer if they made themselves up to look like orcs.

Actually, the drow used the *polymorph self* effect from a *wand of polymorphing* to assume orc form.

"Pssst! Hey, you guys! Don't hit us. We're not going to fight." The voice comes from behind a large clump of dried brush. Peering over the brush is a dirty orc who tosses a weapon on the ground in front of you. "Are you guys from Beleus? Hope so. It would be nice to see some friendlies for a change."

Five more orc heads peak out from the brush. "We're not what we seem. Can we enter your camp peacefully? Don't hurt us or nothing, okay? We're from Beleus, too."

The "orcs" attempt to enter the PCs' camp. One at a time they approach the PCs, each laying down a weapon in an attempt to look sincere. Of course, that's not the only weapon each "orc" has. They will explain to the PCs that they aren't really orcs, and they seem very honest and frightened.

If the PCs do not attack the "orc/adventurers," and seem somewhat friendly, the drow magic-user will pretend to cast a spell (let the PCs think this is the illusionist). On this cue, all the drow change themselves into humans; sparkling motes of green light surround each "orc" as he turns into a human.

If the PCs do not immediately uncover the drow's facade, the drow will attempt to join forces with them, acting very much like inept adventurers in need of help. They talk about the 50,000 gold piece reward. When the drow have gained the PCs' confidence and have gotten a little information out of them, the drow attack. They automatically gain surprise unless any of the PCs state they are carefully watching the group. The drow's first tactic will be a spell assault directed against the heroes' spell casters.

Ruhlun: S 10; I 18; W 17; D 17; Co 9; Ch 17; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD W5; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 +1 (dagger +1); SA spells and; MR 60%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

Ruhlun receives a +3 saving throw bonus vs. mental attacks for his Wisdom score and an additional +1 from his *ring of protection.* As a drow, he gets another additional +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate.*

Magic Items: *Dagger +1, dust of disappearance* (one use), *potion of extra healing, ring of protection +1.*

Spells carried: *magic missile, color spray* (x2), *hypnotism, deafness, mirror image, hold person.*

Giesed: S 8; I 18; W 14; D 18; Co 11; Ch 14; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD W5; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 +2 (dagger +2); SA spells and drow abilities; MR 60%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

As a drow, Giesed gets a +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate.*

Magic Items: *Dagger +2, potion of healing, ring of water walking*

Spells carried: *Charm person, magic missile* (x2), *ventriloquism, mirror image, web, haste.*

Sibb: S 9; I 15; W 12; D 16; Co 18; Ch 14; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD W4; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SA spells and drow abilities; MR 58%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 975.

As a drow, Sibb gets a +2 saving bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius.*

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 8, wand of polymorphing* (10 charges remaining).

Spells carried: *magic missile, protection from good, taunt, invisibility, web.*

Spiroei: STR 18/40; I 10; W 18; D 16; Co 17; Ch 18; AC 3; MV 12; HD F/C 6/6; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6+5/1-4 (short sword +2 and Strength bonus/dagger); SA spells and drow abilities; MR 62%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 2,000.

Spiroei receives a +3 saving throw bonus vs. mental attacks for her Wisdom score. As a drow, she gets an additional +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic.*

Magic Items: *Drow chain mail +1, short sword +2, boots of elvenkind.*
Spells carried: *Command* (x2), cause fear (x3), *hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius* (x2), *resist fire/cold, prayer*, speak with dead, remove paralysis.*
*Cast and running at the beginning of the encounter.

Beadal: S 14; I 10; W 10; D 18; Co 17; Ch 16; AC 1; MV 12; HD F3; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10+1 (two-handed sword +1); SA drow abilities; MR 56%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 420.

As a drow, Beadal gets a +2 saving bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius.*

Magic Items: *Drow chain mail +1, two-handed sword +1.*

Orencaca: S 18/20; I 17; W 16; D 11; Co 12; Ch 18; AC 0; MV 12; HD F7; hp 42; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2+1; Dmg 1-8+5/1-4 (long sword +2 and Strength bonus/dagger); SA drow abilities; MR 64%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

Orencaca receives a +2 saving throw bonus vs. mental attacks for her Wisdom score. As a drow, she gets an additional +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate.*

Magic Items: *Drow chain mail +3, shield +1, long sword +2, potion of extra healing.*

Encounter B: The Valley of Death Graveyard

Once they have dealt with the drow, the PCs travel toward the graveyard for another day and reach it as the sun begins to set. It is up to the party whether to camp outside the graveyard and wait until morning or go in now to face whatever lurks inside.

> Before you stretches a small valley, roughly rectangular in shape, about a half mile wide and one mile long. The sun dips into the horizon, casting its last rays over the valley below and the marble crypts that fill the ancient graveyard within. In the center of the graveyard is a small lake with an island in it.

If the PCs camp outside the graveyard, three waves of undead attack the camp. The first attack comes at about 10 pm, the second, 1d4 hours later, and the third, just before dawn.

Zombies (24): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65 each.

Zombies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. They are utterly fearless. Their slowness causes them to always lose initiative vs. the PCs. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a zombie.

Wights (7): Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 21 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; MR; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975 each.

Wights are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A melee hit from a wight drains one level or hit die from the victim. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a wight. Wights are not harmed by bright light, but shun it when possible.

Mummies (5): Int Low; AL LE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 6+3; hp 30 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA Fear, disease; SD Special; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000 each.

Mummies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. The mere sight of a mummy inspires fear; if a save vs. paralysis fails, the victim is paralyzed with fright for 1d4 rounds. Humans receive a +2 bonus to the save, and large groups of any sort of creatures get a +1 for every six creatures in the group. Mummies burn easily; a blow from a torch inflicts 1d3 points of damage, a flask of oil inflicts 1d8 points of damage on the first round, and 2d8 points on the second round. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a mummy. A melee hit from a mummy inflicts a rotting disease which is fatal in 1d6 months and can be cured only with a *cure disease* spell; the victim gets no benefit from *cure wounds* spells until the mummy rot is cured.

The PCs actually will be safer if they camp in the graveyard. When nightfall comes the undead leave the valley to roam and get rid of any trespassing adventurers or soldiers from Beleus. PCs in the graveyard will encounter one group of undead; two if they are making a considerable amount of noise. Roll randomly to determine which group from the preceding list attacks.

Read the following when the PCs finally explore the graveyard in daylight:

> The graveyard is old. The tombstones and crypts are weathered and cracked, the writing on the stones long since worn away. Weeds and vines grow up many of the stones. It has been many, many years since anyone tended this site.
>
> Still, the place has an air of quiet dignity. Despite the problem of undead, the graveyard seems serene. You can tell that the people buried here must have been important, as the carved tombstones and crypts would have been costly even hundreds of years ago. Those who rest here could have been royalty, generals, and wealthy noblemen. Unfortunately, some of them have had their rest interrupted. You can see where several graves have been opened, and the occupants removed. This, obviously, is the source of the undead.

Any character with a tracking proficiency can find the tracks of assorted undead—it is difficult to tell the difference between types of undead based solely on their tracks. In addition, they can find orc tracks. Persistent tracking also will reveal the tracks of drow and two sets of small, wide footprints.

There are basically two areas of interest in this graveyard: The lake with the island and the small crypt which leads to the villains. Searching through the graveyard will reveal the small crypt. The island is pretty obvious, but it is not necessary for the PCs to go there in their search for the Death Master.

Encounter C: The Island of the Dead

Lake of Death: read the following when the PCs approach the lake:

> The lake is more than 300 feet across and is filled with brackish water that shows no signs of life. Indeed, even the grass and weeds stop about a foot away from the water's edge. A rickety wooden bridge leads from the shore to a small island in the center of the lake. The island has one large, blackened tree on it. A large pile of bones lays under the twisted branches.

The bridge is strong enough to support the weight of up to two PCs at a time. If more than two cross at once, the bridge collapses. The lake ranges from two to 20 feet in depth and is the home of 10 lacedon ghouls. When two characters reach the middle of the bridge, or when the PCs fall in the water because too many tried to cross, the lacedons rise up from the water to attack, attempting to pull the PCs under the water to drown them.

The lacedons' lair is in the south end of the lake, in water about 12 feet deep. Their treasure, which is scattered on the lake bottom, consists of 2,000 cp, 8,000 sp, 1,600 ep, 300 gp, one gem (worth 1,000 gp.), and three pieces of jewelry (worth 8,500 gp). The treasure was taken from some of the opened graves. In addition, there are 14 scrolls, all of which have been ruined by the water.

Lacedons (10): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV Sw 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralyzation; SD Special; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each. Lacedons are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. A melee hit from a lacedon causes the victim to save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds, elves are immune to this effect.

Island of Death: Read the following when the PCs finish with the lacedons:

> The island seems dead, no grass or weeds grow on it, and the large blackened tree seems petrified. Beneath its macabre, twisted branches lays a large pile of bones, and about 20 feet from the bones is an iron-bound wooden trap door.

The door is not locked or trapped. The pile of bones is an animated skeleton of a huge red dragon that has been directed to attack any live being who attempts to lift the trap door. It can neither fly nor breathe fire, nor does it have any treasure. L'rac is very proud of the beast, which he animated himself. He plans to animate several more skeletal monsters and use them in his assault on Beleus. He believes the monsters will frighten away the Beleus commoners and crush the morale of the troops.

If any PC attempts to open the door, the skeletal head of the dragon rises on a long, bony neck, and the great bony beast moves to attack.

Dragon skeleton: Int Non; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-10; SD Special; SZ H; ML —; XP 650.

Skeletons are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Skeletons take only half damage from type P or S weapons and never check morale.

The trap door leads to a 40-foot-square room, which originally was planned to be the resting site for the last Thanus king. L'rac had no respect for the king, and has placed the bones of several monsters inside this vault. He plans to animate them soon.

The PCs must lower themselves into the chamber, as there is no ladder or stairs. There are seven piles of bones inside: baluchitherium, brass dragon, hill giant (which is missing a foot), giraffe, hippopotamus, mastodon, and umber hulk. L'rac has labeled them to make sorting easier, but the ancient script can be deciphered only by a thief's read languages skill or by magical means. Messing up the bones will mess up L'rac's plans to animate them, as he will have to painstakingly separate them.

Encounter D: The Crypt

Most of the crypts in the graveyard are *wizard locked* and overgrown with turf. One door, however, shows signs of recent use and is easily opened (L'rac believes his undead will keep interlopers out of the graveyard and didn't bother to conceal it.)

D1. The Crypt's The Thing

It doesn't make much difference what time of day the PCs elect to go down into the crypt. If the PCs enter during daylight, all the creatures will be in their designated locations. However, if they wait until the evening, the skeletons and shadows in area D2a will come out of the crypt on patrol and will attack the party. Read the following when the PCs enter the crypt:

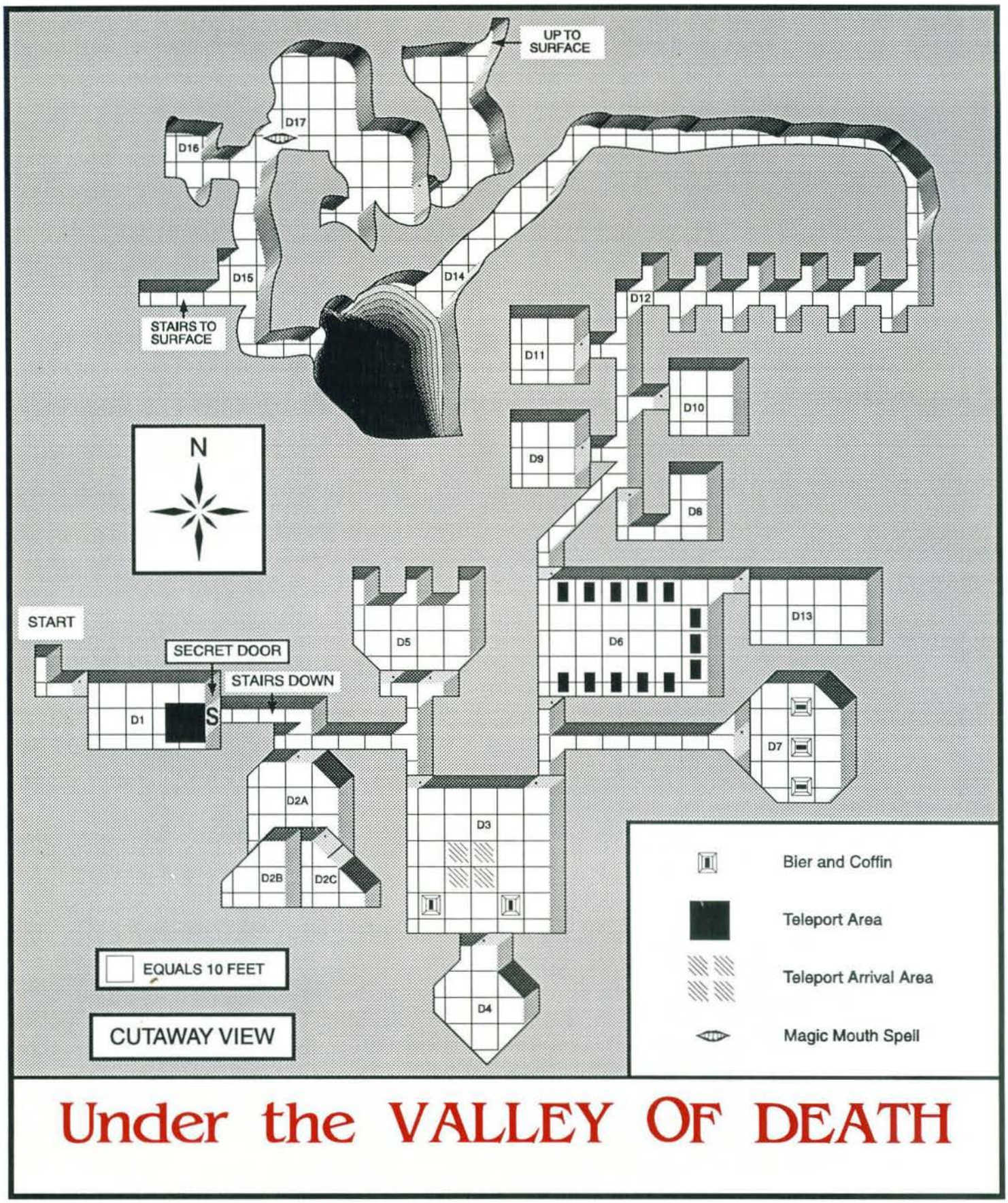
> The interior of this crypt is clean; the black marble walls glisten in the light of the torches, which line the walls. A thin slab of shiny black onyx, 15 feet square, lies at the back of the room. A lone, skeletal figure in brown robes lounges on an elaborate chair atop the slab.

This is one of L'rac Darkray's servants; it is a crypt thing. This creature is a particularly intelligent and powerful specimen. It cannot be turned and it can speak Common. Furthermore, it is an aberrant specimen that paralyzes its victims and simultaneously turns them invisible.

The onyx slab where the crypt thing sits is enchanted and can teleport any living creature that steps on it, or touches it, to the vampire lair in area D3, no save. When the crypt thing paralyzes a group of victims, it picks up the unfortunate creatures and places them on the slab, where they are immediately whisked off to visit the vampires.

The crypt thing will not initiate an attack against the PCs, but will respond in kind if attacked. It will not speak unless spoken to, but if the PCs talk to it they will learn that the crypt thing has been here for nearly 400 years. Others have entered the crypt, and the crypt thing "dealt" with them. The others included young humans and demi-humans in robes and armor (adventurers), foolish orcs, and a floating fog (the gaseous forms of the vampires). The crypt thing guards the entrance to the burial crypts of the early Thanus kings—and will tell the party that. If the party questions it further, the crypt thing will relate how wealthy the kings were and that most of the wealth was buried with them.

Any PC who tries to melee the crypt thing will step on the slab and be teleported (unless he or she is flying). PCs who attack from a distance will be subjected to the crypt thing's paralyzation



Under the VALLEY OF DEATH

attack once per round until all the remaining PCs have been paralyzed or until the crypt thing is destroyed. If the PCs can defeat the crypt thing before they all are teleported or paralyzed, they can find the secret door behind the crypt thing's chair. However, they might inadvertently teleport themselves while looking for it. Stairs behind the secret door lead to Area D2a.

Crypt Thing: Int Genius; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 9; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT; Dmg 1-8; SA melee hit causes save vs. spells or be come paralyzed and invisible for 3d8+2 rounds; SZ M; ML 17; XP 2,000.

The crypt thing is immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison, paralysis, and illusions don't affect it.

D2. Crypt Troops

D2a. Bony Barracks

The corridor (or stairway) leads you to this large wooden and brass door. In the center of the door, about four feet off the ground, is a brass knocker in the shape of a horse's head, the ring extending from the horse's mouth.

There is a unit of skeletons and shadows in the room. If the PCs did not take any precautions to be quiet, the undead hear them come down the stairs (from the crypt thing's chamber above) or will hear them in the hall outside this room. The PCs will not be able to hear the undead in any case.

If the PCs use the knocker three times, the undead troops inside will believe L'rac or the dwarves have come to release them for their nightly patrol and will hesitate a round before attacking the PCs. However, if the PCs start a fight, the undead will comply. If the PCs do not correctly use the knocker (which will likely be the case), the undead will attack as detailed below.

The shadows place themselves along the wall the PCs enter, the skeletons line up on the other side of the room. Their tactic is to sandwich the intruders between them. The shadows are 90% undetectable because they appear as actual shadows. However, they can be clearly seen in the presence of bright light.

Skeletons (36): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SZ M; ML —; XP 65 each.

Skeletons are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Skeletons take only half damage from type P or S weapons and never check morale.

Shadows (18): Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5 + Strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML —; XP 650 each.

Shadows are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A melee hit from a shadow drains one point of Strength from the victim; the loss persists for 2d4 turns. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Shadows are 90% undetectable in anything but the brightest light (sun light or *continual light*).

D2b. Bone Yard

This is another holding area for undead. However, there is no knocker on this door. Inside are 50 skeletons. They will move to attack when the PCs open the door.

Skeletons (50): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SZ M; ML —; XP 65 each.

Skeletons are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Skeletons take only half damage from type P or S weapons and never check morale.

D2c. Come Up to the Lab

An iron door closed with a heavy padlock bars the entrance to this area. The door is newer than the rest of the crypt rooms you have been through. It shows no sign of age, and looking at the wall around the door, you can determine that the door frame has been shaved down to accommodate the larger iron door.

A thief must successfully pick locks to open this door. It is not trapped. A *knock* spell also will work. When the PCs open the door, the guards include a drelb, which can make itself appear to be turned, and a necrophidius, which probably will surprise the party.

Drelb: Int Average; AL NE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 5+3; hp 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA Chill touch; SD Immune normal weapons, reflect psionic attacks; SZ L; ML 20; XP 650.

At first glance, a drelb is indistinguishable from a wraith. It is not undead and cannot be turned, but it can (90%) make itself look like it is retreating when it actually is attacking. A melee hit from a drelb causes the victim to fall shivering to the ground for one round. There is no save, and the victim drops whatever he is holding. Psionic attacks used against or within 30 feet of a drelb are reflected or imitated and used against the attacker.

Necrophidius: Int Average; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Paralyzation; SD Immune to poison and attacks that affect the mind; SZ L; ML 20; XP 270.

A necrophidius cannot be surprised and imposes a −2 on opponent's surprise rolls. In combat, the serpentine creature sways hypnotically, and all viewers must save vs. spell or be *hypnotized* for three rounds. A necrophidius's bite magically paralyzes victims for 1d4 turns, a save vs. spells negates.

The interior of this room is spotless. Gleaming glassware sits upon tables and shelves. Many of the bottles have colored liquid in them. Alchemical equipment lies on some of the tables. A bookshelf on one wall holds a few large books. One of the books is open on a stand in front of the shelf. There also is a large, bubbling vat.

If the PCs look inside the vat, a shadowy, man-like form can be seen at the bottom. This is a man-sized iron golem that L'rac attempted to make. He is attempting to soften the metal so it can be recast into something else. The failed experiment is detailed in the open book on the pedestal by the bookcase.

If the PCs cast *detect magic,* they discover that eight small vials filled with a pink liquid, a jar of lime green cream, a broom and a bottle filled with purple smoke radiate magic.

The vials contain *potions of healing* for the drow force the PCs met in encounter A.

The jar is filled with a lime green cream. This is a faulty batch of *Nolzur's marvelous pigments.* The pigment works in all respects like the item detailed in the DMG except that items created only will last 1d6 turns.

The broom is a *broom of animated*

attack. L'rac originally thought this was a *broom of flying*. He soon found out otherwise, but he hasn't decided what to do with it. The command word "up" is etched on the broom. Any PC trying the broom is dumped off after a gut-wrenching loop. Then the *broom* begins beating the character with the handle. The broom attacks twice a round with THAC0 17. The handle end inflicts 1d3 points of damage, and the straw end causes blindness for one round. The *broom* is AC 7 and has 18 hit points.

The bottle contains Nez al Pahr, L'rac's enslaved djinni.

Pahr: Int Average; AL CG; AC 4; MV 9, Fl 24; HD 7+3; hp 38; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SZ L; ML 14; XP 2,000.

Pahr can perform the following actions once a day: create nutritious food for 2-12 persons, create water or wine for 2-12 persons, create soft wooden items, create an illusion with both visual and auditory components, become invisible, assume *gaseous form, wind walk,* or form a whirlwind. The whirlwind is cone-shaped, 10 feet across at the base, 30 feet across the top and up to 70 feet high. The whirlwind lasts one melee round and causes 2-12 points of damage to any non-aerial creature it encounters. Pahr can carry up to 600 pounds without tiring—twice that amount for a short time.

If the PCs open the bottle to let Pahr out, he will agree to help them one time. (Therefore, the PCs better use him carefully.) Pahr will create food and water or wine for the rescuing party with little provocation, as he is very grateful for his release. Pahr is feeling generous and intends to help the PCs with a problem or assist in a battle; he won't try to evade his promise by obeying requests to the letter or twisting the PCs' meaning. However, Pahr is concerned about his own welfare and will not assist in a battle unless asked. He will float back and watch the PCs fight something. Because of this, it is possible that Pahr could stay with the PCs for most of the adventure, giving the DM something to role-play. Pahr is very friendly, very grateful (as the idea of being a slave to L'rac was very distasteful), and is very, very inquisitive. He asks the party lots of questions about everything. Pahr has not seen anything in this complex other than the inside of the lab. He is not sure how L'rac enslaved him; something to do with powders and reading a scroll. He can describe L'rac as a "black, evil elf." Pahr does not realize L'rac is a lich. He assumes L'rac is a vampire—just like the two little dwarves who have visited the lab before.

The only other items of value in the lab are the books on the shelf, which are not magical. The books discuss the creation of magical protection devices, recommend when certain protection devices be used and detail the spell components needed. A scroll hidden behind the books contains L'rac's notes on various experiments, notes on how to summon a drelb and how to create a necrophidius. The books could be sold for 15,000 gp. The scroll is worth 5,000 gp.

D3. Vampire Twins

This crypt is old and smells of death. Spiderwebs drape the walls like curtains. Dozens of bats cling to the ceiling. In the center of the room, on carved stone biers, rest twin coffins. The coffins are small, made of a rich, dark wood, and are trimmed in silver and gold. The coffins do not have lids.

If the PCs were teleported here by the crypt thing, they appear in the center of the room, near the coffins. As soon as the PCs enter this room, the vampires (floating about in mist form in the spiderwebs) are aware of their presence. Hyden appears before the party and tries to talk with them. If he is successfully turned, he becomes gaseous and Lizzst appears before the party, attempting to communicate with them. They can use the bats for cover, if necessary. If the PCs physically attack either vampire, the vampire initially does not attack back, trying to negotiate.

If the PCs refuse to talk with either vampire, the vampires will turn gaseous and retreat to the spiderwebs. The vampires do not want to attack the PCs because they are hopeful the PCs can take on the lich. They also are hopeful the PCs can release their coffins. However, if the PCs attempt to harm the vampires' coffins, the vampires will pull out the stops and attack, hoping another adventuring group eventually will come along to help them. If the PCs are willing to listen to the vampires, run the dialogue something like this:

A mist floats to the floor and congeals into the form of a dark, dwarven vampire. He raises an arm as if to stop your actions, bares his fangs, and speaks.

"You know, we could fight. You might kill me. Maybe. But not before I have drained much of your life energy. I know you adventuring types. It takes a lot of monster killing and treasure finding to regain that lost energy. Or, we negotiate. And you can walk away rich and unscathed. You see, the problem I face is the problem you face—L'rac Darkray, the man gathering forces of undead to march on the pitiful, peaceful town of Beleus."

Another voice speaks from behind you (the other vampire, Lizzst. Hyden, who spoke first will turn gaseous as soon as the PCs' attentions are on Lizzst. The vampires prefer to appear individually.)

"L'rac Darkray," continues the dark, dwarven vampire, who looks only slightly different than the other you addressed, "Is a cunning lich who wants power at all costs, caring nothing for the people and monsters who aid him. His evil is darker and deeper than the evil which fills my brother and I. And without our help, his evil could overcome you. We have a proposition for you."

The duergars' proposition is for the PCs to get their coffins out of this area and defeat L'rac. The duergars would prefer the PCs remove the coffins first (just in case the PCs die in a fight with L'rac), but they will not push the point if the PCs want to fight L'rac and then remove the coffins. If L'rac is defeated, and the PCs then decide to harm the coffins or turn on the vampires, the vampires still win because they are free of the lich. They will be very upset about losing their ornate burial coffins, but they will get over it, as they are free and they have a few other coffins elsewhere. If L'rac is defeated the vampires will have only the PCs to fight.

If the PCs attack now, the vampires will not fight to the death, turning gaseous and escaping when they have taken more than half of their hit points in damage.

When paralyzed and invisible PCs have been teleported into the crypt the vampires know when they arrive—the arrival is accompanied by a subsonic "pop" that the vampires recognize instantly. They also have become adept at locating paralyzed victims. The vampires have no qualms about using these victims as bargaining chips. Depending on the situation they will be helpful:

"Just to show we mean well, we'll return your missing comrades to you—at no small risk to ourselves." Of course there is no difficulty or risk, but don't tell the PCs that. If the PCs want to know where the missing characters are, the vampires make up a quick but convincing lie: The lich's crypt, the Astral Plane, Hades, etc. In other situations they will be threatening: "Want to know where your friends are? They were really quite delicious!"

If the PCs ask the duergar about the lich, they tell the PCs that they know he is very, very old. He was around at the time of the first few Thanus kings. They will say the lich bragged about "doing in" one of the kings and putting another king into power who was sympathetic to L'rac. The vampires do not care about the Thanus kings and don't understand L'rac's behavior. Despite the lich's apparent disregard for royalty when they were living, he seems to respect them in death, leaving their remains alone. In addition, the vampires believe L'rac had plans of eventually setting himself up as a Thanus king, as the lich seems to want power above all else. The vampires do not fault the lich for his motivations, as they also think power is important.

The vampires have been in nearly every room in this complex, and depending on the way the PCs treat them, they might be willing to impart some of their knowledge. They tell the PCs the lich lives in a cavern complex, which was not a part of the original crypt, but was discovered by accident. The vampires will show the PCs the way there. However, they will be adamant the PCs recover an *arrow of lich slaying* first (explained below). This is a vehicle for the PCs to explore the crypt. Besides their duergar abilities, the vampires can call upon the bats in this room and the wolves in Area D4.

The Coffins: L'rac has set up an elaborate trap on the twins' coffins. First, the lich removed the coffin lids to expose the dirt in them. Next, he trapped them so that if they are moved more than one foot, a spray of holy water will drench both coffins, the exposed dirt in the coffins, and anyone standing within five feet of the coffins. If the PCs agree to attempt to free the coffins, the duergar will insist that the dirt in them be protected. Removing the dirt before moving the coffins will work. Other methods also will work, depending on clever the PCs are. The duergar insist that a PC not try to disarm the trap (which the duergar/thief/vampire could have attempted), because a failed attempt definitely would set off the trap off. If, however, the PC thief attempts to do this, make the remove traps roll at −20 because of the complexity. If the PC thief sets off the trap and causes the holy water to spray over the dirt in the coffins, the vampires will be furious, but at least they will have their coffins free. Remember, they have more coffins elsewhere. The vampires have been able to charm common people to move the coffins, but every common person they have brought into the complex, L'rac has killed and turned into an undead.

The Vampires' Treasure: The vampires' treasure is in the dirt in the coffins. All together, there are 900 pp, 200 gp, and 20 gems each worth 400 gp. In addition, the ornate burial coffins are very valuable. The gems and gold designs on the coffins can be picked off. The removed items are worth 9,000 gp. The vampires also carry magic items with them (see the NPC section for details).

The Vampires and L'rac: The vampires tell the PCs there is an item which they are certain can harm the lich hidden within the crypt. It is an arrow that L'rac stole from the body of an adventurer. L'rac killed the adventurer before he could fire the arrow. The vampires know the lich has hidden the arrow somewhere within this crypt complex (apparently, L'rac couldn't destroy the arrow). The vampires have not bothered to seek it out because they don't use bows. However, they encourage the PCs to find the arrow and use it to slay the lich.

The Truth About the Arrow: The arrow will do nothing special against the lich; it is an *arrow of vampire slaying.* L'rac knows this, and therefore has kept it hidden, planning to use it (via one of his servants) against Hyden or Lizzst if one of them becomes too difficult to manage. The vampires believe it is an *arrow of lich slaying.*

The Vampires and The PCs: One or both of the vampires will agree to accompany the PCs throughout the crypt—if the PCs really want them to. However, one of the vampires will prefer to remain in the area with the coffins to maintain a lookout for L'rac. If one or both vampires accompany the PCs, they will be suspicious and will constantly watch the PCs. The vampires can tell the PCs a little bit about what is behind each door. For example (area D1): Some of L'rac's skeletons are kept here. Because the vampires have never been attacked by L'rac's troops, they do not mention knocking on the door to prevent an attack. The vampires also will not mention any precautions about the laboratory, as the "bony snake" and the "wraith-thing" have never attacked them. Further, the vampires will not join the PCs in fighting anything down here—until the final battle with L'rac—unless it appears there will be a few PC casualties. The vampires would like to gain control of L'rac's forces when the lich is eliminated, so they don't want to help the PCs destroy anything except L'rac. Further, when and if the PCs confront the lich, the vampires will help as little as they can and still keep the PCs' confidence. If possible, they will be unobtrusive; in case the PCs lose, they don't want L'rac to know they were involved in the attack. In fact, if the PCs begin to lose the fight, the vampires will turn on them so as to appear loyal to L'rac.

Ideally, the vampires want the PCs and L'rac to destroy each other or hurt each other so much that the vampires easily can defeat the winner. To this end, they will try to keep the PCs in the fight as long as possible. They will, reluctantly, use their abilities to help the PCs, and, even more reluctantly, attack the lich if necessary. If the PCs try to flee, they will use their charm abilities to keep them in the fight. Remember, the vampires are chaotic evil creatures with no scruples whatsoever. Their only goal is to get the maximum gain for the least risk and cost to themselves.

The Vampires and Pahr: If the PCs pick up one or both vampires and Pahr, the djinni, there will be numerous and uncomfortable personality clashes. Pahr wants nothing to do with vampires, and the vampires aren't especially fond of the now-freed djinni. Pahr will ask that the vampire(s) be left someplace for a while. If the PCs refuse, allow the vampire(s) to argue with Pahr on and off throughout the adventure. This will provide further role playing for the DM and should serve to frustrate the PCs.

D4. Wolves

A harsh odor pours out of this room. Inside are about two dozen wolves. The wolves appear a little undernourished, and their hair is matted and tangled.

These wolves are under the vampires' control. They do not like being underground, and are only allowed to go outside occasionally at night. The wolves will not attack the PCs if the vampires are in their company—unless the vampires instruct them to do so. Their condition is a result of their treatment. They are fed—but not enough, and their "den" is not ideal.

Wolves (20): Int Semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65 each.

D5. More Undead Troops

If the vampires are with the PCs, they will explain that some of L'rac's forces are kept behind these doors. The vampires will try to dissuade the PCs from attacking these undead, coming up with all manner of excuses: there are too many of them, they are too powerful, the PCs should concentrate on L'rac instead of his followers. This, of course, is because the vampires want to command the undead forces when L'rac is out of the picture. If, however, the PCs pay no attention to the vampires and go in, they should be able to deal with the zombies and ghouls inside with little problem. There is nothing of value in this room.

Zombies (18): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65 each.

Zombies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. They are utterly fearless. Their slowness causes them to always lose initiative vs. the PCs. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes.

Ghouls (12): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralyzation; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each.

Ghouls are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. A melee hit from a ghoul causes the victim to save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds, elves are immune to this effect.

D6. Real Crypt

Coffins are spaced evenly throughout this room. Many of the coffins are ornate, and all of them are very, very old.

This is the resting chamber for the relatives of the early Thanus kings. Because the relatives were not considered as important as the kings, their names were not inscribed on the coffins or anywhere in this room. There are a total of 36 coffins. The vampires have not disturbed these coffins, despite the wealth inside, because of L'rac's orders. In spite of L'rac's evilness, he holds some reverence for Thanus' past, and has decided to leave the remains of these people alone. The people who were buried in the cemetery above, however, he considered fair game as they must not have been as important as those people buried in the crypt.

If the PCs want to play the part of grave robbers, they can search the coffins and find a total of 9,000 gold pieces worth of gems and jewelry. The vampires will not assist the PCs in any looting here.

This room is a time waster. If the PCs want to spend time here describe the coffins, commenting on age and ornateness. The oldest coffins will be the farthest from the door. A *speak with dead* spell will not work on any of the people buried here, as they have been dead too long.

D7. A Place For Kings

A pair of large, bronze doors etched with scenes of battle are before you.

These doors are not locked or trapped, and the guards were long ago eliminated. This is the resting place for the first three Thanus kings. L'rac has left this room undisturbed because of his odd sense of honor. It is specially enchanted so that the moment someone steps into the room scenes from Thanus' history will be shown on the walls. The enchantment is a specially-researched *programmed illusion* that is triggered by the presence of life. This effect does not go off when the vampires, the lich, or other undead are in this room. The scenes show a once-mighty Thanus empire, where the rulers and wealthy are dressed in fine, elaborate costumes. The buildings are in good repair, and everything appears clean. The scenes focus on three individuals, all who wear the same crown. The three people are not shown at the same time. The PCs will have to state they are watching the scenes to notice the shift between rulers. There also is a shift in style of clothes, and there will be different statues outside the buildings. Also, during the showing of the third king's reign, a drow can be noticed in the background. This is L'rac Darkray, who was beginning to rise to a position of importance. If the vampires or the djinni are with the PCs, they will point out L'rac. (However, give the PCs a chance to notice the drow.) The scenes will not portray Thanus' defeat at the hands of the Beleus army, as that happened after these kings' reigns. However, the scenes will show other battles.

The remains of the kings have been perfectly preserved. Each king: Thanus The First, Thanus The Second, and Thanus The Third, has jewelry worth 10,000 gp in his coffin. The names of the kings are written in an obscure form of Common, which the PCs can decipher. Again, speak with dead will not work on the kings because they have been dead for so long. Player characters who come within 10' of the middle coffin, the one belonging to the second Thanus king, will catch the attention of the phantom left from that king. The second Thanus king was murdered with a poison (put in his wine by a very young, very greedy L'rac Darkray. The public thought the king died of natural causes. The king was buried here, but because of the trauma of his death, a phantom was created and haunts this place. It cannot be harmed, nor can it harm the PCs. But PCs who gaze on the translucent form of the phantom must save vs. spells at −2 or panic and run away as if they were under the effects of a *fear* spell. The phantom recorded the death of the king, and PCs watching it will "witness" the king's death via the phantom, from the poisoning to the burial. The phantom cannot be turned. L'rac poisoned the second king because he was in league with the king's oldest son (the third Thanus king), and believed getting the second king out of the way would improve his own position.

D8. L'rac's Treasure Chamber

As you approach this door a strong odor wafts across your path. There is no mistaking the scent of garlic. Buds of garlic are smeared over the door and are hung all the way around the door frame. The smell is overpowering.

L'rac doesn't fully trust his vampire associates, and so took the precaution of putting garlic all around the entrance to his treasure chamber. Neither vampire will come near this door. The door is locked, but not trapped. L'rac figured the garlic, the lock, and his "friend" inside would be enough to keep away the vampires and anyone else. If the PCs open the door, they see a mound of silver pieces, glistening in the beams of a *continual light* rock which hangs from the ceiling. There is a large chest in the center of the silver pieces. Milling about across the silver pieces are 36 rats. The vampires can control 30 of these rats. One of the rats is a guardian familiar (the same thing as a cat guardian familiar). The PCs will have to deal with the rat if they want to get the treasure. The lids to the vampire's coffins also are in this room. The lids and silver pieces can be taken without a fight. The rat guardian familiar will only attack if the chest is disturbed. Although the vampires (if they are with the PCs) will not want to come into this room, they will be transfixed by the possible wealth inside. The vampires will charm a few of the rats and tell them to bring out the wealth—a silver piece at a time if necessary. And they very much want the coffin lids. The chest is locked, but not trapped. The treasure inside is 20,000 gp worth of gems and 10 +1 arrows. If the PCs bring out the arrows, and the vampires are with them, they will be elated, as they are certain one of the arrows must be the magical arrow that will "slay" the lich.

Rats (36): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1/4; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Disease; SZ T; ML 4; XP 7 each.

A bite from one of these rats has a 20% chance to infect the victim with a disease that causes incapacitation in 1d4 days and death in 1d3 weeks unless cured.

Guardian Familiar: Int Animal; AL CE; AC 8-0; MV 12-28; HD 1-9; hp 6-54; THAC0 20-11; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 (+0-8 per attack); SA see below; MR 80%; SZ S; ML —; XP 3,000.

A guardian familiar literally has nine lives. Each time it is brought to zero it points it immediately is "reborn" with an extra hit die (with the appropriate improvement in saving throws and THAC0 and, in this case, six extra hit points), a +1 bonus to armor class and damage rolls, and a +2 bonus to movement. The creature is not reborn if it is "killed" nine times. Several spells also can stop the rebirth, provided they overcome the creature's magic resistance and the creature fails its save: *disintegrate, flesh to stone, temporal stasis, wish,* and *limited wish.* A *holy word* banishes the creature back to its home plane.

D9. Abandoned Living Quarters

This room contains a crudely made bed and chair, which were apparently made out of the remains of coffins. The remains of a dwarf lie in a corner. This unfortunate soul was exploring the Valley of Death, came upon the crypt, and was teleported by the crypt thing. The dwarf luckily evaded the vampires and stumbled upon a store of food and wine (which L'rac was saving for some orcish troops he was planning to recruit). A diary in the bed details his experience with the crypt thing and his finding of the food and wine. He also relates that he couldn't find a way out without running into the crypt thing again. He talks about the undead wandering around and a pair of dwarves that he constantly had to avoid. PCs searching the remains will find claw marks. Some of L'rac's undead finally killed the dwarf, and L'rac never bothered to do anything with the body.

D10. Food Storage

An old iron padlock hangs from this wooden and iron door. The construction here doesn't match the rest of this crypt.

This is a food storage area for L'rac's living troops. The vampire brothers pick the lock and take food from it occasionally, but not often enough, to feed the wolves. There are shelves of dried fruits, meats and vegetables. There are several bags of flour, a few casks of wine, and a few jugs of spoiled beer.

D11 Just Another Laboratory

The door to this room is not locked or trapped.

Three small tables are spaced evenly apart in the center of this room. They are covered with a few vials, bowls, and sacks.

There is a shelf against the far wall. It contains a few books and a few scrolls.

There is nothing magical in this room. The sacks contain bits of bone, hair, and powders. The vials are empty. The books detail the methods for summoning and binding guardian familiars and other creatures at the DM's option. The books are written in an obscure Elvish language, but with careful study the PCs can translate them if they can read Elvish. The books are worth at least 3,000 gp.

D12 Hallway of Fear

L'rac enjoys his privacy, and therefore took special effort to keep the living creatures he employs from visiting him in his chambers. L'rac charmed eight Beleus soldiers who were patrolling the Valley of Death, brought them to this crypt, and killed them in this corridor. They have become poltergeists, and they attack all creatures coming into the corridor. The vampires, which are immune to the poltergeists' fear effect, go down this corridor in mist form so they will not be pelted by rocks. If the vampires are with the PCs, they will caution them to put their shields over their heads, as rocks frequently fall from the ceiling in this area. The poltergeists are invisible and non-corporeal, so it is very possible the PCs will not know they are facing undead.

This long corridor extends into darkness. The walls are rough, indicating it is not a part of the actual crypt complex.

There are eight alcoves off this corridor. Each alcove is the resting place for a poltergeist. The poltergeists throw rocks at the PCs when they enter the corridor. Creatures struck by a poltergeist's missiles must save vs. fear or flee for 2-24 rounds.

Poltergeists (8): Int Low; AL LE; AC 10; MV 6; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg Fear; SD Invisible, hit only by silver or magic weapons; SZ M; ML —; XP 35 each.

Poltergeists are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. Holy water does not harm poltergeists, and they are treated as ghouls when turning attempts are made against them. A poltergeist attacks by mentally hurling fairly lightweight objects. Creatures struck by a poltergeist's missiles must save vs. fear or flee for 2-24 rounds. When

hurling objects, a poltergeist has the THAC0 of a five-die creature.

D13 The Kings' Wives

A large bronze door covered with etchings of beautiful, dancing women prevents you from going further. The scent of wildflowers floats in the air here, and from somewhere beyond the door you hear faint music.

This is the burial chamber for the wives of the three kings buried in this complex. This is also a time-waster for the PCs. However, if they want to waste time and explore it, let them. Inside are 12 coffins. The room is divided into thirds. In the first third there are seven coffins (the first king had seven wives); in the second section is one coffin; and in the last section are four coffins. A *programmed illusion,* which operates like the one in the king's room, will go into effect when someone living walks into this room. The illusions show the marriage ceremonies between each king and his wives. The music and the scent of wildflowers are also permanent special effects. *Speak with dead* spells do not work, as the remains are too old. There is nothing of value in the coffins—not even jewelry. The wives, who are perfectly preserved, were buried without any wealth. However, they are dressed in exquisite garments.

D14 The Perilous Chasm

The end of the tunnel opens into a great chasm, which obviously wasn't a part of the crypt complex. However, most of the rocks are smooth, showing the age of this place. The cavern is lit by luminous moss, bathing the place in eerie shadows.

The chasm must be at least 120 feet across. (This is distorted and compressed on the map to make everything fit.) There are no walkways around it, and it must be more than 100 feet deep, as you cannot see the bottom, which is shrouded in total darkness.

Across the chasm you see a tunnel that apparently continues farther.

The PCs will have to get across the chasm to get to the lich. There are several avenues available. *Spider climbing* or flying across will work. Two vampires can carry one unencumbered PC across (if the PCs are willing to trust the vampires). The vampires *can* carry PCs without draining them. Ropes can be secured to rocky outcroppings on either side of the chasm, so PCs could climb across if one can first fly over to secure a rope to a rock on the other side. If the PCs take precautions, none of them will fall in, and all can get across. Feel free to make the PCs nervous about the entire procedure (a Dexterity check or two would be appropriate here). The chasm is 350 feet deep. There are a only few old bones at the bottom. Across from where the PCs entered the cavern is another tunnel that continues on toward the lich's den. If a character with tracking proficiency checks here, he can tell that someone has been through the tunnel, as the moss is smashed down in places.

The tunnel continues farther away from the crypt. The walls are partially illuminated by glowing moss.

D15. The Way To The Surface

A narrow, worn staircase ascends into darkness. PCs following this stairway will find a way into a looted crypt and then out onto the surface.

D16. The Lich's Study

The glowing moss also illuminates this room, which is filled with books. A desk in the center of the room is cluttered with papers. A large, wooden and partially rotted chair sits near the bookcase.

The books detail the history of Thanus, from the first king to the planned war on Beleus. The papers on the desk describe L'rac's plans to fight Beleus with his army of undead. Inside the desk drawer are quills, vials of ink, and an arrow. This is the *arrow of vampire slaying.*

D17. The Lich's Den

If the PCs proceed down the tunnel toward the lich's chamber they trigger a *magic mouth* set five feet off the ground about 30 feet from where the tunnel opens into the lich's chambers. A second *magic mouth* is located at the end of the tunnel. Both *magic mouths* say, "Who goes there?" This is a warning to the lich. The *magic mouths* are triggered whenever a creature at least five feet tall approaches them, or when the other *magic mouth* goes off. The vampires are both under five feet tall, and it would be virtually impossible for any of the undead in the crypt complex to trigger it since they can't get across the chasm. Therefore, when the *mouths* are triggered, there are intruders. Note that the second *magic mouth* will go off when the first one does even if the party is using a *silence, 15' radius* (the *magic mouth* detects the first mouth being triggered, it does not need to "hear" anything).

Once alerted, L'rac turns invisible, flies to the top of his chamber, and casts *hallucinatory terrain* on the chamber to make it appear as a chasm with a natural stone bridge going across it. If the PCs try to "cross" this bridge, they will be nicely grouped together for a *fireball, cone of cold,* or *chain lightning* spell from L'rac. Casting any of these spells will make the lich visible (casting *hallucinatory terrain* does not), but L'rac is not worried. If the vampires are with the PCs, they will not want to enter this area. They do not want the lich to know they are revolting against him. If the PCs are not able to handle the lich, they want to still be in good graces with him. They will come up with all manner of excuses for not entering the chamber, such as: we can't go in there—too many holy symbols and too much garlic; if we go in there, your plan to destroy the lich will be revealed too soon. However, if the PCs use convincing tactics, the vampires will join them in a fight. If the PCs do not try to enlist the vampires' aid, the vampires will turn to mist to watch the fight. If the PCs weren't fooled by the *hallucinatory* bridge, the lich will take time to cast a *globe of invulnerability* on himself (against *fireballs*), and then casts *reverse gravity* on an area where he can get the most PCs. Again, this will cause him to be visible, but he is confident in his abilities to defeat the PCs. Other tactics he might use include casting *transmute rock to mud,* and then *dispel magic,* to trap the PCs in the cavern floor. Afterward, he'll try casting *darkness 15' radius* on spell casters, *ice storm* on the fighters, and any other spells in his memory which seem appropriate. If the lich loses more than half of his hit points, he attempts to escape, fleeing into the last chamber. If he is able to do this, he will cast a *wraithform* spell on himself and slip into a crack in the ceiling. The PCs will have to scrutinize the room to find him. The lich will only attack further if he believes he has the upper hand. If very hard pressed, he uses *dimension door.*

The lich's room is very opulent and plush, furnished with a large canopy

bed. The floor has many pillows scattered on it. All of the furnishings are old, but of fine quality. The walls are covered with mirrors of all sizes and shapes, as the lich is very vain. There is nothing of value here other than the furniture.

Ending the Adventure: If the PCs have not already dealt with the vampires, they probably will have to fight them. The vampires want to maintain their freedom and establish control over the lich's troops. They don't want any humans to know what they have here. If they are badly damaged they will be inclined to let the PCs go, or they will flee if the PCs attack.

If the PCs defeat both L'rac and the vampires, they can return victoriously to Beleus; however, it is up to the DM to decide if the PCs actually collect the full 50,000 gp reward (the gratitude of kings is notoriously short-lived). If any PCs were killed, the Beleus king will agree to raise them instead of paying the PCs the 50,000 gp reward. Likewise, *restoration* spells might be available in lieu of a reward at the DM's option.

Villains

Hyden and Lizzst, duergar vampires: Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 45 (Hyden), 51 (Lizzst); THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA Energy drain; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ S; ML 16; XP 4,000 each.

Magic Items (Hyden): *Ring of feather falling, boots of striding and springing.*

Magic Items (Lizzst): *Dust of appearance* (2 uses), *boots of levitation, brooch of shielding* (21 charges).

Creatures struck by a vampire are drained two life energy levels, complete with corresponding losses in hit dice, ability level and attack level. Vampires regenerate three hit points per melee round. If taken to 0 hit points, a vampire is not killed, but is forced into gaseous form. It must return to its coffin within 12 turns, rest eight hours, and then reform a corporeal body. *Sleep, charm* and *hold* spells do not affect vampires. They take one-half damage from cold-based spells or electricity. They can assume gaseous form at will, change into a large bat when desired, and can summon rats, bats, and wolves. They can be slain by: exposure to bright sunlight, being immersed in running water for three melee rounds or driving a stake through the its heart. These vampires also retain the following duergar abilities: Immunity to paralysis and poison, the psionic powers *mind thrust, ego whip, id insinuation, mind blank, thought shield, mental barrier, poison sense, expansion, invisibility, molecular agitation,* and *reduction.* Each psionic ability has a power score of 12 and each vampire has 72 PSPs.

Background: Hyden and Lizzst are brothers who were both killed several hundred years ago by a vampire. When that vampire was killed, they became free agents and terrorized the countryside together until they met L'rac. Through deception and base trickery, the lich captured the pair's coffins. The lich keeps their main two coffins in his complex, trapped and guarded so the duergar cannot move them. In addition, L'rac knows the locations of the brothers' secondary coffins. L'rac uses this to keep the duergar under his control, sweetening the uneasy partnership with promises of wealth when Beleus falls. Because of the promised treasure, L'rac believes the vampires are on his side. However, the two vampires have been plotting to defeat the lich and release their coffins. While the vampires realize they could leave the lich by each taking a secondary coffin and heading to another land, they are concerned the lich would follow them to exact a terrible vengeance. And they are adamant about keeping their main, ornate coffins in which they were buried.

Hyden, a thief when he was alive, has average abilities at 6th level (see DMG, page 23). He is as greedy as he is evil and believes wealth is far more important than power. Until meeting L'rac, he was far happier as a vampire than as a duergar thief. When free of L'rac's clutches, he plans to go off on his own, so he will not have to share his wealth with his brother.

Lizzst, a duergar fighter in life, hates this "arrangement" with L'rac nearly as much as he detests his own undead state. Lizzst has grown to hate all life, but he realizes living creatures might be able to aid in the vampires' escape from the lich. Lizzst cares little for material wealth, except for magic items which he believes will make him more powerful. Lizzst desires power above all else.

L'rac Darkray, drow lich: Int Supragenius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 6; HD W16; hp 62; THAC0 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Paralysis; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 17; XP 7,000.

Spells Remaining: *Spook, burning hands, detect magic, magic missile* (x2), *stinking cloud, darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, ESP, invisibility, clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, hold person, wraithform, dimension door, fumble, hallucinatory terrain, ice storm, fire shield, animate dead, transmute rock to mud, cone of cold, globe of invulnerability, project image, chain lightning, delayed blast fireball, reverse gravity.*

Magic items: *Ring of flying, dust of appearance (1 use), figurine of wondrous power* (Asian elephant).

The mere sight of a lich causes creatures with less than five hit dice to save vs. spells or flee in terror for 5d4 rounds. Liches are immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity,* or *death* spells. L'rac has not retained the drow abilities he had during life.

Background: L'rac Darkray began to come to power during the reign of the second Thanus king. However, that king saw L'rac as a threat and prevented him from being appointed court mage. L'rac poisoned the king—a fact no one learned—and gained more power under the third king. Because of a drow's long life span, coupled with magic items to lengthen his life, L'rac lived through the reigns of several kings. When the last Thanus king waged war on the Beleus empire, and his army was defeated, L'rac's plans for ultimate power were dashed. He fled the area, became a lich through arcane, dark forces and planned to eventually come back and take Beleus. He is gathering an army of undead, orcs and a few drow, and is formulating battle strategies to crush the Beleus kingdom. L'rac is greedy, values power above all else and does not trust anyone. He spends nearly all of his time in his chambers formulating battle plans. Because his chambers are so far from the rest of the crypt complex, he cannot hear any battles that would go on there. However, if the PCs spend more than 18 hours within the crypt, or leave and then come back again, L'rac notices their presence and will consider confronting them directly. L'rac hates life and living creatures, and he will be happy to attack the PCs if they approach his chambers. However, he will be angry at himself and the vampires for allowing the PCs to get that far. L'rac will not fight to the death, as he prefers to run away if severely damaged, heal his wounds, and come back to plot again. He knows that time is on his side. ❑

Into The Dark

Mayhem At The Movies

by James Lowder

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

Movie House Massacre

1986, 80 Minutes
Active Home Video
Director: Alice Raley
Cast: Mary Woronov, Rob Roy Fletcher, Jonathan Blakely
1/2

We open *Movie House Massacre* with a flashback of sorts, though no one bothers to mention the scene takes place more than forty years in the past until about halfway through the film. An usher in a theater that is losing its stage in favor of a movie screen finds his girlfriend two-timing him with a fellow employee. He takes this calmly, as you might suspect from the title, and proceeds to burn them alive with flaming film stock. Sadly, the maniac didn't think to attack them with the master negative of *Movie House Massacre* itself, so the film continues, leaping suddenly to the present.

The sleazy owner of the Spotlite Theater chain of cinema multiplexes decides to open the old theater. He sends three of his brightest employees from the main multiplex to clean up the place and get it ready for opening night. These are the usual brainless teens one typically finds hanging around Camp Crystal Lake, waiting for Jason to play volleyball with their severed heads—though the *Friday the 13th* series usually features better actors.

Cleaning up the theater proves to be more difficult than one might expect, since the place seems to be haunted. Doors blow open and closed. Films run by themselves. Of course the stunningly silly effects are on par with the average local haunted house. Still, these dreary FX sequences are more interesting than the endless shots we get of a guy vacuuming inside the theater.

Well, wouldn't you know it, but there's an old maniac running around in the movie house, killing all the girls who wander in like lemmings toward a high cliff. This includes a couple of cheerleaders—a must for the victim's list in this sort of flick—and some obnoxious usherettes. Can you guess who the killer is? If you can't, you should be made to watch this dog, maybe even twice.

Apart from the myriad vacuum cleaner demonstrations, the most annoying thing about *Movie House Massacre* is the utterly misfired humor. The jokes wouldn't be funny even if the actors could deliver one of them without flubbing the punchline.

Drive-In Massacre

1976, 78 Minutes
New American Films/Magnum
Director: Stuart Segall
Cast: Jake Barnes, Adam Lawrence, Douglas Goodbuy
***1/2**

When a lunatic starts hacking up couples at the local drive-in, Inspectors Koch and Leary drop their doughnuts and get right on the case. The suspects are thicker than kids at the concession stand at intermission. Could it be Germy, the dim-witted janitor who used to do a sword act in the carnival? How about the obnoxious manager, Austin Johnson, who hates everyone and used to work the carnival circuit with Germy? Or what about their boss, the unseen Mr. Van Hussen, who has a really cool sword collection?

Drive-In Massacre would be just another run-of-the-mill sort of slasher film if it weren't so strange. It specializes in bizarre characters and goofy gore effects, the most memorable of which features a guy starting his car, throwing it in reverse, and watching his girlfriend's head roll off her shoulders as he tries to back up. There's a gun battle with a thug in a warehouse that was obviously filmed for another movie and inserted here to lengthen the film. That's one of the most amusing sections, though, because the madman seems to switch weapons from shot to shot; one minute he's got a gun, the next a knife.

As you might expect, *Drive-In Massacre* features bad acting, terrible editing, and more mangled lines than the average speech by Dan Quayle. Yet it tries hard to be suspenseful, and the plot is so muddled you can actually get caught up in guessing who the murderer is.

Listen for the gimmicky closing announcement from the "theater manager." The shocking message loses some effects coming from your television, but it's hokey enough to get a chuckle anyway.

Popcorn

1991, 93 Minutes
RCA/Columbia
Director: Mark Herrier
Cast: Jill Schoelen, Tom Villard, Tony Roberts
***

Like *Movie House Massacre* and *Drive-In Massacre*, *Popcorn* is your basic madman-on-the-loose-in-the-balcony sort of film. Unlike those two clunkers, it will hold your attention for most of its running time.

When the film program at a California university runs low on money, the students and instructors clean up an old theater and throw a film festival. The students are the usual assortment of teen character types, with the most prominent being Maggie (Jill Schoelen), who's being plagued by nightmares of a mysterious man menacing a little girl. And when the film students discover a copy of an old experimental film called *Possessor*, Maggie recognizes the man from her dreams and the plot really gets moving.

It seems someone is after Maggie because of her mysterious link to the maker of *Possessor*, a lunatic who killed his family on stage as part of the premiere of the film. On the night of the festival, the students fall prey to a madman one-by-one, until the true identity and purpose of the murderer is revealed.

Well-traveled ground for a horror film, no? Well, the best parts of *Popcorn* center on the cheesy fifties sf films the students show at the festival: *Mosquito* in 3D Project-O-Vision; *The Stench* in Aroma-Rama; and *Attack of the Amazing Electrified Man* in Shock-O-Scope. The parodies of classic films like *Them!* and *The Indestructable Man* are funny and used nicely to break up the somewhat predictable mad slasher plot. ❑

Ghost Dragon by John Rateliff

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	20
THAC0:	2
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10 + 10/1-10 + 10/2-24 + 10, 2-20 + 10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See Below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See Below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Special
SIZE:	G (40′ to 100′)
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	10,500 (defeat), 21,000 (placate), 32,000 (lay permanently to rest)

A ghost dragon is a sinister looking, semi-transparent figure. It resembles whatever dragon type it was in life. All ghost dragons are a swirling murky gray, and they always speak in quiet whispers.

A ghost dragon is created when an ancient dragon is slain and its hoard looted. In many cases, the dragon died defending its hoard and home. The tie between a dragon and its hoard is not well understood by non-draconian forms; it goes far beyond mere human greed or dwarven avarice. Most dragons know the location and approximate value of the major items in their hoards.

The ghost dragon will haunt its former lair until it manages to accumulate enough treasure to equal the value of its vanished wealth; then it will depart and rest in peace.

Ghost dragons never stir from their lairs. They are less belligerent than their living kin, but more obsessive. In many ways they resemble revenants more than true ghosts, except that they have no interest in revenge. All a ghost dragon thinks about is its treasure. Unfortunately for intruders, in the ghost dragon's mind any and all valuables brought into its lair fall into this category. Since a ghost dragon can only find peace if it succeeds in rebuilding its hoard, it will demand trespassers hand over any treasure they are carrying—gold, jewelry, magical items, etc. The creature will allow polite adventurers to keep 10% of their possessions (a procedure it calls "tithing"), and will also answer questions they might have regarding neighboring monsters or events it knew about in its lifetime. Those who refuse to turn over their valuables are savagely attacked.

Combat: A ghost dragon has several different attack modes, and since it is an exceptionally intelligent creature, it will always choose the combination which will best achieve its goal. Ghost dragons have a *fear* aura far more dangerous than that of their living counterparts. Victims of a ghost dragon's aura must make two saving throws, both at a −4 penalty: one vs. petrification to avoid aging 10-30 years and a second vs. spells to avoid cowering in terror for a full turn (10 minutes). Note that the aura affects all in the dragon's lair at the time it appears, including beings normally immune to fear effects, such as paladins.

A ghost dragon will never ambush intruders; it always uses its aura first to get their attention and give them a chance to hand over their wealth without a fight. If they refuse and attack the ghost dragon, try to leave, or (worst yet!) attempt to steal some of its remaining treasure, it begins its assault. In addition to its aura, a ghost dragon has a claw/claw/tail slap/bite combat sequence daunting to even the toughest warrior. Not only can it inflict up to 104 points of damage in a single round, but each successful hit requires the victim to make a saving throw vs. death magic or lose three levels to energy drain. Further, the struck limb withers (see *staff of withering*). Finally, a ghost dragon has a breath weapon it can use three times before its internal energies must rest 12 rounds (following that rest it can breathe three times again). The breath weapon is a cloud of gray mist which ages any creature caught in it 1-100 years for humans, half-elves, and halflings; 10-1,000 years for elves; 30-300 years for dwarves; and 60-600 years for gnomes.

Ghost dragons are immune to all spells cast by non-ethereal opponents and all weapons of less than a +3 bonus. They cannot be affected by *hold, charm, sleep,* and other control spells, even when those are cast from the ethereal plane. Like revenants, they cannot be turned or controlled by clerics; they are also immune to the effects of holy water.

Even if a party succeeds in "killing" a ghost dragon, it will simply reform 48 hours later and resume its attempts to rebuild its hoard. Most adventurers who have encountered one have found out that it is generally better to give a ghost dragon what it wants. In fact, the experience point values for dealing with ghost dragons reflect this: characters who realize that their lives are worth more than their possessions receive twice as much experience.

The only way to lay a ghost dragon is by giving it treasure. Once it manages to accumulate enough wealth to equal its lost hoard, it will whisper a quiet "thank you" and disappear forever, leaving the treasure it has accumulated behind for anyone who wants it.

Habitat/Society: Ghost dragons are solitary creatures haunting the desolate ruins of their empty lairs. They can be found anywhere a live dragon would secure its most prized possessions, but always in dark, underground or indoor places. As intelligent creatures, they enjoy the occasional conversation with intruders, but will never allow themselves to be talked out of the treasure they need. Since only ancient dragons can become ghost dragons, and since most ghost dragons spend centuries if not millennia in that state, they can be valuable sources of information about the past—for those willing to pay their price. It is rumored that living dragons sympathize with the anguish ghost dragons feel over their plundered wealth and often help their departed kin by sending potential treasure their way in the form of unwary adventurers.

Ecology: Like most incorporeal undead, ghost dragons play no part in the ecology of the physical world, neither eating nor sleeping. Ferocious predators in life, in death they completely drop out of the food chain. They do, however, play a large part in the *economy* of the regions they inhabit, as their tithing of passing adventurers tends to deplete both cash and surplus magic items in those parts. The ghost dragons are thus highly valued by DMs seeking to curb runaway inflation in their campaign worlds.

Scavenger Spirit by Gary Watkins

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Low
TREASURE:	Z
ALIGNMENT:	Any neutral or evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	0 or 5
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1-4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6 per attack
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Paralyzation, suggestion
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Silver or magical weapons to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5'-6')
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	650

Scavenger spirits are similar to haunts. Their undead forms are ghostlike, shimmering and insubstantial. In this state they have an armor class of 0. They can assume a semi-material form at will, which gives them an armor class of 5. Scavenger spirits frequently take the form of what their living bodies looked like. However, they are able to assume any medium-sized form, such as human, demi-human or various plants or animals. These latter forms often are used to help them hide or to confuse their quarry.

In life, scavenger spirits were humans and demi-humans who profited from the dead. Most of them were grave robbers or camp followers who stripped those who fell in battle. A few were adventurers who ruthlessly and unthinkingly plundered tombs.

Now, in death, scavenger spirits are cursed to steal from the living. Scavenger spirits can pickpocket with a 70% chance of success. To do this, they must assume a semi-material form. When the scavenger spirit has acquired an item of value, the spirit will flee to its lair and add the ill-gotten gains to its hoard. Characters who are successfully pickpocketed do not see the scavenger spirit.

The spirits are often, but not always, encountered in graveyards or ancient battlefields. Some take up residences near tombs filled with riches and over recent battlefields that have not yet been plundered. They long so desperately for the wealth carried by the dead that they will whisper a *suggestion* to passing humans and demi-humans to stop and take the objects left behind. Once a living person has acquired the wealth, the scavenger spirits are free to steal it. The spirits can use their *suggestion* ability once each turn.

When two or more scavenger spirits are together, they can combine their energies to cast a *dig* spell. This can be used up to three times a day. The spirits often unearth coffins or clear the way to buried tombs in the hopes passing adventurers will stop and loot the dead. The spirits will add a *suggestion* or two if necessary. Again, once the living have acquired the treasure, the spirits are free to steal it from them.

Combat: Scavenger spirits avoid fighting if at all possible; the sole purpose in their unlife is to steal. They attack only when they are in danger or if their hoard is threatened. In combat, scavenger spirits attack with their filthy claws—up to four of them depending on the form chosen. Each claw attack causes 1-6 points of damage. In addition, victims must save vs. spells, at a −2 penalty, or be paralyzed with fear and disgust for 1d6 rounds. If the scavenger spirit is not involved in any other melees, it will loot the paralyzed body and return to its lair. Lawful good priests are immune to the *paralysis* touch.

Scavenger spirits must remain in their semi-material state during combat. The spirits can be harmed only by silver or magical weapons. They are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death magic,* poisons and cold-based spells.

These spirits are turned as "special" on the priest undead turning table.

Habitat/Society: A scavenger spirit usually remains near the site of its death, though it is not constrained to do so—especially if the location presents few opportunities to steal. Scavenger spritits are found singly or in small groups, each one of them driven by a compulsion to steal.

Ecology: Unlike most other forms of undead, scavenger spirits do not propagate their kind by slaying the living. A victim slain by a scavenger spirit simply dies. Scavenger spirits are only created when a living human or demi-human intentionally steals from burial places or battlefields. These thefts do not include simple acts like picking up a fallen soldier's sword. They usually entail repeated stealing of personal possessions and objects of wealth or importance that were purposefully placed with the dead.

Scavenger spirits hoard treasure and magic, though they have no use for the items. It is simply their curse to repeat the sins they committed in life.

Animals can sense scavenger spirits' unnatural origins and instinctively avoid them.

Grave Watcher

by Cheryl McNally-Frech

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tombs, crypts, graveyards, burial grounds
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Unknown
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-2
MOVEMENT:	18
HIT DICE:	5-16
THAC0:	15 (5-6 HD) 13 (7-8 HD) 11 (9-10 HD) 9 (11-12 HD) 7 (13-14 HD) 5 (15-16 HD)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Varies
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8 per attack
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Regeneration, immune to electrical attacks, edged weapons cause half damage
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Immune to mind-effecting spells
SIZE:	M (5′-6′)
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	1,400 (5 HD) 2,000 (6-7 HD) 4,000 (8 HD) 5,000 (9 HD) 6,000 (10-11 HD) 7,000 (12-13 HD) 8,000 (14-15 HD)

A grave watcher looks like hundreds of tiny, pulsating lights—a ballet of fireflies hovering over a grave or about a tomb. At any given time the lights are all the same color. However, the colors do vary from creature to creature, from white to rose to emerald green and shades in between.

The lights are not a part of the creature, but are residual bursts of energy that it constantly gives off. Some sages believe that the colors of the lights correspond to the creature's moods or strength. The lights effectively mask the creature, which is a black, vaguely man-shaped form with tentacles. The lights can also be distracting. Any characters viewing a grave watcher for the first time easily can become mesmerized by the light display. Such characters must make a saving throw vs. petrification at a −2 penalty or stand transfixed by the lights for 2d4 rounds.

The body of a grave watcher is made of thousands of small particles from the negative material plane that are held together by electrical energy. A grave watcher's hit dice determines the number of tentacles it has: HD − 4 = # of tentacles. For example, a 5 HD grave watcher has one tentacle, a 6 HD, two; a 7 HD, three; and a 15 HD, 11.

Further, grave watchers have maximum hit points. This means a 5 HD grave watcher has 40 hit points, and a 15 HD grave watcher has 120.

Combat: A grave watcher only attacks if someone or something trespasses over a grave it has chosen to watch. A grave watcher has as many attacks as it has appendages. Each successful strike causes 1d8 points of electrical damage. In addition, if a struck victim is wearing or carrying more than 20 pounds of metal, the electricity has a scatter effect. All those standing within 10 feet of him suffer 1d8 points of damage from the electricity bouncing off of him (save vs. breath weapon for half). Please note that most metal armor weighs more than 20 pounds, and treasure often has a lot of metal in it.

For every 8 hit points of damage the grave watcher suffers, it loses one tentacle, and therefore one attack. Tentacles reform and reattach to the main body after four rounds (regenerating 2 hp a round); however, if a grave watcher's hit points ever fall below zero, the creature is slain.

Because a grave watcher is composed of small particles, edged weapons cause only half damage, as they pass between some of the particles. Bludgeoning weapons cause full damage, however. Magical attacks which are mind-effecting, such as *charm person, charm monster, suggestion,* etc. have no effect on a grave watcher. Electrical attacks harmlessly pass through the creature's body.

Grave watchers which have 10 or more hit dice can split themselves in two. For example, a 10 HD grave watcher can become two 5 HD grave watchers. This process takes four rounds.

Habitat/Society: Each grave watcher guards a specific area and will not allow intruders to disturb the dead or their possessions. It is not known how a grave watcher chooses a home, but it is rumored that one can be summoned to act as a guardian.

Only one grave watcher has been noted at any one time. Sages theorize that when multiple grave watchers come in contact with each other they fuse to form a larger creature.

Ecology: Grave watchers perform a useful task by guarding the resting places of those departed from this world.

Bloodstone Zombie by David Ballenger

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Average
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	3+3
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-7/2-7 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Death grip, disease
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Silver or +1 or better weapon to hit, immunity to illusion/ phantasm spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6')
MORALE:	20 (fearless)
XP VALUE:	420

Bloodstone zombies are initially difficult to recognize as undead. They appear to be beautiful humans and demihumans with smooth skin, sparkling eyes, and white teeth. These creatures are often able to approach their victims casually, not revealing their undead nature until they close to melee. Then their intended victims can see the Bloodstone zombies' clawlike fingers and smell the stench of the grave.

This type of undead was created decades ago by an insane necromancer. The necromancer considered undead beautiful creatures, and he devoted his life to creating zombies that were as handsome as stately princes and as comely as the most shapely dancing girl. He succeeded by concocting a disease that killed its victims and brought them back to life as undead. The process also gave them a near-perfect appearance—good looks they did not have while they breathed. Unfortunately for the necromancer, he died at the claws of his lovely minions, realizing, by becoming one of their kind, that the disease he created could be passed on.

Bloodstone zombies hate all life and attack whenever they deem the odds in their favor. They avoid fights with superior numbers or with fighters in heavy armor; the zombies have no desire to return to their graves.

Combat: Bloodstone zombies are very strong, with an effective Strength of 18/50. However, because their movements are not as fluid as living fighters, they cannot fully utilize their strength, hence delivering only 2-7 points of damage per claw attack. When using weapons they receive only a +2 damage bonus.

Because Bloodstone zombies are more intelligent than other zombies, they set traps for their foes. Comely Bloodstone zombies have been known to lure unsuspecting victims into dark alleys. And handsome Bloodstone zombies, sprinkled with colognes to hide their stench, have escorted lone women to their dooms. Of course, the zombies also take the simple approach of a straightforward melee. Unlike other zombies, Bloodstone Zombies do not automatically lose initiative.

In melee, a Bloodstone zombie strikes with its claws. If both claw attacks hit, the zombie has successfully grabbed its victim in a "death grip" and can inflict its special attack. Victims are held for 1d6+1 rounds; they can break free earlier with a successful bend bars/lift gates roll. For every round a victim is held, he or she must make a saving throw versus death magic. Failure means the victim has contracted a disease carried by the Bloodstone zombie. The disease causes the victim to lose 2 points of Strength and Constitution per hour. When the victim's Strength and Constitution scores reach zero, he or she dies and will rise as a Bloodstone zombie one hour later.

Any personal items left on the victim will be carried by the newly-risen Bloodstone zombie and will be used to help hide its undead nature. Thus, treasure carried by Bloodstone zombies could range from a few coins to magical weapons.

Victims who are struck by the claws of a Bloodstone zombie, but who are not held in the death grip, also have a chance of contracting the disease, dying and returning as a zombie. These victims also must make a saving throw vs. death magic, but they receive a +4 bonus to their roll.

Burning a victim who dies of the zombie disease will prevent him or her from becoming undead.

Bloodstone zombies are aware that normal weapons will not harm them. Although they are capable of using the weapons they wielded in life, they prefer to attack with their claws.

Bloodstone zombies turn as wights on the priest undead turning table.

Habitat/Society: Bloodstone zombies do not have a social order, nor do they recognize any form of government among their kind. With few exceptions, they are free-willed undead.

Ecology: Their capability to spread the Bloodstone zombie disease is their only means of continuing their species. The ease at which this disease is transmitted seems to insure the survival of their kind.

Evil clerics reportedly seek the zombies to add to their stable of undead.

The Living Galaxy

Save The Last Danse Macabre For Me

by Roger E. Moore

The bogeyman's going to get you.

I'm not trying to insult your intelligence. You don't have to be a six-year-old child to believe in the bogeyman. Every time you go down into your basement, every time you climb the stairs to your attic, every time you pass a dark alley at night in the city, you're just inches away from the bogeyman. The bogeyman is the sum of all our fears, all things buried and forgotten by daylight but returned to life by night. The bogeyman has a million faces and forms. No mortal power can keep him at bay, much less kill him. He will live forever.

For our purposes, that's a good thing.

In honor of Halloween, we're going to look at some ways to bring the presence of the bogeyman right into the science fiction role playing game you play. It isn't easy; it takes practice and skill. If you've been the game master of Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game, TSR's AD&D® RAVENLOFT® setting, GDW's *Dark Conspiracy* system, or any other horror role playing rules, you already have a leg up on the other GMs. Even then, genuine horror is hard to evoke in a gang of snickering, pizza-eating gamers whose characters are armed with lasers, shotguns, napalm, and portable nukes. What could possibly hurt them, much less frighten them?

But a laser means nothing when the bogeyman has you by the legs and is dragging you down a hole in the ground, and those hundred-megawatt bursts of radiation you're firing while you scream don't even slow the bastard down.

Welcome to terror that spans the stars.

Entering The Twilight Zone

There are a number of special game-mastering methods by which you can induce fear and horror in any role playing game. One of the best sources of ideas for such "techniques of terror" (as the book calls them) is the *Realm of Terror* handbook in TSR's RAVENLOFT boxed set. By all means, borrow this book from your friends if you don't already have it, then carefully read pages 129-137. Here is a wealth of insidious ideas that can be applied to a campaign with ease, even a campaign on an alien world (perhaps *especially* on an alien world). Even more ideas appear in the RAVENLOFT appendix to the AD&D *Monstrous Compendium,* in the discussion of "Encounters in Ravenloft," and in DRAGON® Magazine #162, in an outstanding *Game Wizards* column by Bruce Nesmith (pages 79-80). Find these sources and study them carefully.

Some of these techniques, with examples of how to use them in science fiction games, are given here. Use them thoughtfully and with care. Your players will never forget you for it.

Real Enough To Touch

To properly get across an atmosphere of horror, you start with little details: the smell of ozone in a starship's darkened bridge, the silence of the passenger lounge when everyone's gone to bed, the cool breeze you didn't expect in an empty corridor. Panicked voices rise and fade on the subspace radio, their words garbled and lost. A xenobiologist in her lab hears the click of a cage door opening. A heavily armed mercenary pulls his coat tightly around him against the knife-sharp arctic wind, then hears the snow crunch under a footstep. A cat burglar places his hand in a cold, peculiar slime trail in a pitch-black warehouse. Details set the atmosphere, preparing the stage for the kill to come, making it frightening and believeable.

Focus on the five senses as much as possible. Give the players enough description of the game environment so that it comes to life for them in their imagination. What does the skin of an alien feel like? What stench does a corpse give off after two weeks in a locked room? How do the shadows in a moonlit forest play with your vision? You want to bring out heat and coldness, rough and soft, heavy and light, darkness and illumination, blood red and diseased green, acrid and charnel, bitter and foul. Play on the players' minds and fears in a subtle way. A headless body can be too gross to frighten; the sound of an airlock door opening can utterly terrify at the right moment.

But Not Real At All

"Warping the familiar" is the term used in the RAVENLOFT book for making supernatural or horrific events convincing by blending the bizarre with the familiar and the ordinary. A pool of splattered blood lies in an abandoned but otherwise normal space-station corridor. Amid the usual singing of insects at night comes a peculiar crooning noise that the local guide cannot identify. A foul odor of something long dead reaches the nose of a steward in his freshly cleaned cabin. Something is wrong with one of the cryo-genically frozen human bodies in a cold-sleep berth, but the ship's officer on night watch cannot pinpoint it. Perhaps even the stars look wrong through the windows of the ship, obscured by some sort of black mist or dust.

What seems familiar and safe can lead you into the shadow of death, opening the doors to purest horror. A friendly dog turns out to be an unspeakably grotesque shape-changing monster in John Carpenter's version of the movie *The Thing;* a seemingly healed crewman turns out to have a ghastly parasite inside his chest in *Alien.* Relaxing your guard only sets you up for the kill; the bogeyman gets you when you least expect it. Even if the normal/abnormal combination doesn't kill you, it will draw you into realms of fear. An ultra-modern home has the images of a human family burned into the blackened wood on one side, their bodies vaporized by a hydrogen-bomb burst in Ray Bradbury's story, "There Will Come Soft Rains." What dreadful things would adventurers find in a ruined city rich with atomic mementos?

Other examples of this technique abound. *Call of Cthulhu* adventures make heavy use of familiar places and objects that become the setting for frightening events. In the source book *Cthulhu Now,* the space shuttle *Atlantis* is attacked by a sentient alien monstrosity in "The Killer Out of Space"; the shuttle then crash-lands in Kansas, where the creature begins killing humans and infecting plant life with the mind-bending "Colour." Stanislaw Lem skillfully blends the known and unknown in his novel, *The Invincible:* Aboard a deserted starship bearing

signs of insane destruction, an investigator finds soap bars that have tooth marks on them—a find that frightens the discoverer, as he has no earthly reason to account for such mad actions by the missing crewmen. Another Ray Bradbury story, "The Third Expedition," has a highly effective account of what happened to Earthmen who landed on Mars and thought that Mars was really Heaven (of course, Mars turned out to be something very different indeed). A similar "warping the familiar" effect can be found in the *MegaTraveller* adventure, "Fated Voyage," by Michael R. Mikesh, from *Challenge* magazine issue #46 (Oct.-Nov. 1990); here, a gateway opens aboard a normal starship to another starship lost ages ago in jumpspace, with all its attendant horrors.

Best of all, from the GM's point of view, sometimes the bogeyman can follow one or more characters right into their own homes, whether planetside or in their starship staterooms. How did Officer Ripley feel when she found the Alien in the shuttlecraft at the end of you-know-which movie? When even the most familiar and comforting environment isn't safe, the characters are primed for an evening of dreadful possibilities.

Take Time For Terror

Avoid direct confrontations with grotesque and frightening things early in an adventure. Tease at the players' senses; lead them into fear by degrees. Take your time. Let the players feel safe for a while, then slowly lead them out of the paths of the ordinary and strip their characters, bit by bit, of their vaunted defenses. The movie *Alien* is a prime example of this slow descent into the pit, as are two Stanislaw Lem novels, *The Invincible* and *The Investigation* (the latter a detective mystery in which modern investigators find that an unknown force is animating human corpses).

In line with this concept of progressive terror, make the attacks against the characters increasingly more brutal and telling during the adventure. A finger prick serves early on, but only death fits the bill at the end. Save your best hits for last.

Imagine, for example, that the characters are investigating alien ruins on a poisonous-atmosphere planet, much as in the early *Traveller* adventure, *Shadows,* from Double Adventure 1. As the GM, you know that somewhere in the ruins is a nest of spiderlike hunting carnivores with a telepathic group mind that creates interference with normal radio transmissions. These creatures are somewhat intelligent, but they regard the intrusion of the spacesuited humans into their realm as an assault by another hunting species. Being telepathic, the aliens habitually mount hallucinatory "dream attacks" against all their foes and victims.

As the humans wander through the ruins, they find odd manufactured items unlike any known before. Perhaps the remains of previous intelligent visitors (the unlucky ones) are found. Solitary individuals are soon struck by hallucinatory episodes in which they think they see and travel down corridors that don't really exist, or else they walk into pits and traps thinking they are safe. Resting characters are hit with nightmares, believing that horrifying but unseen monsters pursue them through the dark tunnels; upon awakening, they mistake their own comrades for attacking alien creatures. Lone characters might simply disappear if trapped or lost. Finally, the spider-creatures themselves attack, in hellish fashion, attempting to kill or drive away the intruders. It would ruin this scenario to have the spiderlike aliens attack right away; it's better to allow the GM's descriptions and aliens' mental attacks to work their toll first, building tension to the screaming point.

Keep The Horror Hidden

A vital point in horror role playing is to keep as much of the true horror hidden as long as possible, letting its secondary effects be seen and known first (as detailed in the previous section). In H. P. Lovecraft's novels and stories of the Cthulhu mythos, you never start out facing a terrifying opponent, but the existence of one is made very plain over time (mutilated bodies of victims, peculiar physical signs like slime trails, odd eyewitness accounts, strange references in old books, etc.). Detective work by the characters will slowly build up a picture of the true force that they face, but even then they won't learn everything.

In some cases, the characters might look right at the foe who will plunge them into fear, but they'll never know it. If you were to meet Dr. Hannibal Lechter, the cannibalistic psychiatrist of the movie and novel *Silence of the Lambs,* you'd probably never know him for the psychopathic genius he was—until it was far too late to do anything about it. Likewise, Dr. Henry Jekyll seems quite the pleasant sort until Mr. Hyde comes out, in Robert Louis Stevenson's famed tale. Remember the dog in John Carpenter's *The Thing?* The bogeyman in each case is quite well hidden—in plain view.

The bogeyman might actually be invisible. The birdlike aliens known as the Droyne, from GDW's *Traveller/MegaTraveller* system, can use psionics to go invisible; what if one went mad and began to steal things or kill people? An energy being might be invisible or able to possess other creatures (the latter happens in the *Star Trek* TV episode, "Wolf in the Fold"). Maybe the killer is simply good at hiding, like the Alien. In any event, give some clues as to what's going on, but keep the horror hidden for as long as possible. Then bring it out in all its terrifying glory.

Vulnerability Gets Results

I ran a *Traveller* adventure some years ago, modified from a short module in an issue of GDW's *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society.* In it, the heroes were to go out with tranquilizer guns and subdue a lab technician who had been injected by accident with an experimental serum. The technician had killed several people and escaped from the lab, appearing to be quite insane. Things seemed straightforward enough.

However, further investigation revealed that the infected technician seemed far more powerful than was normal for a human, and on his way into the wilderness he had stolen a high-powered rifle with a sniper scope and explosive ammunition. The company hiring the heroes tried to minimize this problem, but the company people in charge of hiring the characters were plainly upset and nervous. The characters, now a little more apprehensive, pursued the murderer in their all-terrain vehicle.

Soon enough, the characters began to discover evidence of the madman's passing. They found herd animals randomly shot to death, each killed with a single bullet to the head from distances of up to a mile or more. (The madman was deep in a paranoid nightmare and imagined every creature meant him harm.) The characters learned that they were horribly vulnerable to being shot at any time, but they could do almost nothing about it. The madman soon found them and shot out their ATV headlights with pinpoint accuracy. In response, the adventurers threw away their tranquilizer guns and loaded their most deadly

weaponry for the final battle the following day, which was a tense confrontation. Making the heroes vulnerable to attack at any time, with little chance of immediate retaliation, produced a fine thrill of fear in the players.

Consider, too, the case of the computer HAL 9000 from *2001: A Space Odyssey.* HAL controlled all of the functions of the *Discovery,* and it could read lips, make plans, control space pods, and kill crewmen as it pleased. The Alien, from the first movie, could hide almost anywhere and attack from complete surprise. If you can't outrun your foe, if you can't detect it, if you can't stop it, and especially if it controls the environment and the characters' perceptions (in extreme cases, if it can mentally possess the characters and force them to commit its own deeds), then more fear is added to the scenario. Consider the thrilling last moments of the movie, *The Andromeda Strain,* in which the hero must outwit the security system of a secret base to prevent the base from being blown up; he was fighting an environment he could not control.

Look for whatever means the players use to make their heroes invulnerable, then strip those defenses away or make them useless. Powered armor doesn't save you from psionic assault, entrapment in webs or sealed-off corridors, or being isolated and surrounded by monstrous foes waiting for your air and batteries to give out. Even powered armor eventually breaks down. That's what the bogeyman is waiting for.

Caught In A Trap

Entrapment is a very powerful technique to use in inducing terror in gaming. Entrapment can be physical, as in having the characters enter dark, narrow corridors or mine tunnels in heavy spacesuits or protective gear; this produces claustrophobia, especially if you add webs, nets, traps, quicksand, encircling tentacles, and the like. Having a hero get himself locked in a small laboratory room with a hostile (and maybe invisible) creature is a nice trick here. How do you think characters would feel if they were aboard a damaged submarine that was sinking into an oceanic abyss, or on a battle-scarred spacecraft slowly falling into a planet's atmosphere to burn up, or on a starship lost in the depths of the galaxy and running out of air?

Entrapment also can be mental. Characters can be deceived, tricked, mislead, or wrongly guided into performing certain behaviors that will cause them harm. Some of these traps seem perfectly legitimate. The *Nostromo* was ordered to check out a peculiar transmission on an unexplored planet in *Alien;* the crew had no choice but to investigate—and so were caught. False orders given to a group of characters could lead them into dangerous straits, pulling their safe world from beneath their feet. If a character cannot act to save himself because he cannot break out of the walls of his own mind, he is ready for a meeting with the bogeyman.

You can even combine mental and physical traps. A female spy or soldier might take a mission deep in enemy territory, actually walking about openly among others of her kind on a foreign world. She gets a false or garbled order, and in carrying it out she draws the attention of authorities, who shut down the transportation lines that are her only links with freedom. She is now prevented from escaping to safer countries or worlds; one false move, and she will be arrested and executed in a gruesome fashion. She suspects there are allies around, but she cannot find them without revealing herself. She is trapped mentally and physically—and she is isolated, too, which will be discussed later. This character is plainly open to a terrifying experience.

Unfortunate Circumstances

Not to overwhelm you with material from this movie, but again *Alien* brings us another technique of terror in the area of unplanned misfortunes. The *Nostromo* is unexpectedly forced to stop at an ugly little planet, thus allowing the adventure of horror to begin for its crew. In your own campaign, such events can happen several times in the course of a horror adventure to throw the characters' plans off-track and prepare them for a nightmare journey. Suppose an engine malfunction just happens to occur while the characters' ship is exploring an alien planet. The accident happens to be bad enough to force the ship to land in a swamp; the crew can handle this so far. But then the radio goes bad because of some local interference. The characters need to gather food and water, but the water is tainted and causes them to become ill and weak. The world's rotation is very slow, so nights and days are very long—and it's almost nighttime, when the blood-drinking swamp natives begin to scout the ship and its crew.

Setbacks, losses, mistakes, and other unfortunate circumstances cause the heroes to doubt that they'll be able to handle things, as more and more bad luck seems to pile up. The more doubt they have in their own abilities to cope, the better the horror will be.

Intense Isolation

Game designer William W. Connors once ran a *MegaTraveller* adventure that I took part in; the adventure, "Ghost Ship," was written by Bill and previously published in an issue of *The Traveller's Digest,* from Digest Group Publications. Our ship misjumped after taking a hit in the engines while escaping a space battle. As a result, we came out of jumpspace in an unknown star system with no habitable planets. Scattered comets, asteroids, and vast gas giants were all that we could find. We were deeply affected by the sense that we were cut off from all other beings and might never find our way back to our fellows. The isolation, of course, merely deepened our sense of apprehension when we picked up a strange radio signal coming from elsewhere within the system. That signal led us to a battered military ship from an era long past, and a terrible secret that it held within. We were never directly threat-

ened by anything we found on this adventure, but you wouldn't know it from the way the isolation and terror ate away at us.

No one likes to be alone, and characters who are separated from their partners are most at risk of falling victim to the bogeyman. But you can meet the bogeyman even when standing in the middle of a crowd, if no one speaks your language, looks like you, dresses like you, thinks like you, or will raise a hand to help you. Your own friends might turn on you, as happens in the infamous Shirley Jackson short story, "The Lottery." Playing on the sense that the characters can't find their way back to friendly faces and places really punches up a horror adventure.

For Further Reading

This overview of horror techniques is not complete, of course, but there are many resources out there that can fill you in on ways to bring the touch of the bogeyman to your players. Aside from the superb RAVENLOFT® game materials noted earlier, the following references have lots to recommend them for GMs who wish to throw a little fright into their gaming sessions.

Anobile, Richard J., ed. *Alien.* New York: Avon Books, 1979 (trade paperback). This is the "movie novel" version of the famous film, incorporating over 1,000 color photographs from the movie with plot commentary and dialog. This is nice for focusing on specific events in the film, though you really have to see the movie to appreciate the full impact of it. See how many "techniques of terror" you can identify in this film as you watch it—or, better yet, after you watch it and can calm down.

Hodgson, William Hope. *Carnacki the Ghost-Finder.* London: Sphere Books, 1980 (paperback). If you can find this collection of short stories (it was first published in 1913, before the author's death in World War I), read it. These tales of a psychic "ghost-busting" detective provide an atmosphere of real horror that you might be able to duplicate in gaming sessions; see especially "The Haunted *Jarvee*," "The Gateway of the Monster," and "The Hog." Some of the tales of investigated hauntings turn out to have rational explanations and are even more suitable for gaming use when no fantasy or psychic elements are present to explain unusual occurrences (especially "The Thing Invisible" and "The House Among the Laurels").

King, Stephen. *Danse Macabre.* New York: Berkley Books, 1982 (trade paperback). Get this book! It is the Master's own commentary on the genre of horror in the mass media, and it contains many ideas for plots, characters, settings, and everything else you'd need in a science fiction horror game. It's wonderful—in a Stephen King sort of way, of course.

Schow, David J., and Jeffrey Frentzen. *The Outer Limits: The Official Companion.* New York: Ace Science Fiction Books, 1986 (trade paperback). Some of the most terrifying science fiction TV shows ever shown appeared on *The Outer Limits,* which aired from 1963-1965. This illustrated volume has synopses of all the episodes, and it and the *Twilight Zone Companion* are divinely inspired reading. Having watched some of these shows as a kid, I can still recall the spine-chilling look of some of the aliens, especially the antlike critters from "The Zanti Misfits" and the creature from "Cold Hands, Warm Heart," both of which nearly put me in an early grave. For gaming purposes, seek out such marvelously named episodes as "The Architects of Fear," "The Hundred Days of the Dragon," "Nightmare," "Corpus Earthling," "The Invisibles," and the magnificent "Demon With a Glass Hand." Some of these episodes are available on videocassette, by the way.

Zicree, Marc Scott. *The Twilight Zone Companion.* New York: Bantam Book, 1982 (trade paperback). The most horrifying TV shows ever shown that did *not* appear on *The Outer Limits* appeared instead on an earlier show with which everyone in North America is probably familiar: *The Twilight Zone.* Episodes like "The Lonely," "The Invaders," "The Rip Van Winkle Caper," "To Serve Man," "The Midnight Sun," "In His Image," "Death Ship," "Number Twelve Looks Just Like You," "Steel," and the unforgettable "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" have powerful blends of science fiction, science fantasy, and horror. If you can find this book, you could cull it for many dozens of plot situations that will leave your gaming group gasping. Here, too, some episodes are available on videocassette.

Finally, several gaming supplements strike me as useful in this field, particularly two of them: *Cthulhu Now* and *At Your Door,* for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game. For a massive dose of modern, high-tech terror, these two volumes are very hard to beat. You may have trouble fitting these adventures directly into a hard science fiction campaign in another game system, but you'll learn loads about plot staging and specific use of the "techniques of terror" by studying these in detail. Think a tactical nuke will stop a Great Old One? Think again.

You should also comb through old issues of *Challenge* magazine and *The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society,* from GDW, for *Traveller* and *Mega-Traveller* adventures featuring horror themes. Julia Martin was kind enough to point out several of them to me: "The Day of the Glow," from *JTAS* issue #6; "Chill," from *JTAS* issue #15; "The Thing in the Depths," from *JTAS* issue #22; and "Thought Waves," from the anthology *The Best of the Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society,* volume #4.

I must also recommend the 104-page *Twilight: 2000/Merc: 2000* supplement, *Twilight Nightmares,* for some marvelous excursions into the dark realms for modern-era games, easily adaptable to futuristic societies and worlds.

By all means, too, examine the horror role playing products of other companies and look for things you can use in your own campaign. Borrow from resources like Mayfair's *Chill* game, Palladium's *Beyond the Supernatural* and *Rifts* systems, the *Tharkold* supplement to West End Games' *Torg* system, and White Wolf's *Vampire: The Masquerade* game. Watch your favorite horror films or read your favorite horror novels. As has been said many times in this column, steal only the best.

Enjoy your Halloween, on whatever planet you inhabit. See you next month for a trip to the library—and the secrets of creativity revealed at last.

❑

The Living City

Eormennoth

by David Carl Argall

It is a little-known fact that the city treasury in Ravens Bluff has one of the most secure public vaults in the Realms—certainly the most secure such vault in the Vast. This is because the treasury's chief guard, Eormennoth, a bronze dragon, makes his lair in the vault. It is effectively impossible to remove anything from the vault without his quickly learning of it, and screaming bloody murder if the removal wasn't approved.

This is actually less of a deterrent to burglars than to dishonest guards and other government "thieves" who usually work on a larger scale and want to siphon funds away from the treasury on a continuing basis. In the years before Eormennoth came to the city, gold kept in the treasury tended to "shrink" while those in charge of it somehow managed to live well beyond their salaries. Such theft and embezzlement might have bankrupted the city. Eormennoth eliminated the direct shrinkage by raising the alarm nearly as soon as the money was taken. Even today, Eormennoth sees to it that withdrawals from the treasury are duly noted in the records. In the early days, such money still had a bad habit of frequently vanishing thereafter, but that was not Eormennoth's concern. With the arrival of Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane and Vernon Condor, the city's alert and energetic Regent of the Exchequer, the illicit flow of funds out of the government coffers has all but stopped.

Eormennoth

Old Male Bronze Dragon

AC:	−6
MV:	9, Fl 30 (C), Sw 12
HD:	18
hp:	93
# AT:	3
THAC0:	5
Dmg:	1-8+8/1-8+8/4-24+8
MR:	35%
INT:	Exceptional
AL:	LG
SZ:	G (78′ + 65′ tail)

Special Abilities: Snatch, kick, tail slap, wing buffet, plummet, *detect invisibility* (80′ radius), immune to normal missiles, generate *fear* when attacking (30 yard radius), immune to electricity; spell-like abilities cast at 16th level: *water breathing* and *speak with animals* at will, *create food and water, ESP, airy water* (80′ radius) and *polymorph self* three times a day, *wall of fog,* and *weather summoning,* once a day; breath weapon once every three rounds: lightning (in a bolt 100′ long and 5′ wide for 16d8+8 points of damage, save vs. breath weapon for half) or repulsion gas (cloud 20′ long, 30′ wide, and 30′ high, save vs. breath weapon or move away for 1d6+10 rounds)

Spells Carried: *Charm person, ventriloquism, invisibility, magic mouth, sepia snake sigil, command*
Languages: Can communicate with any intelligent creature
Possessions: Unrevealed

Eormennoth came to make his lair in Ravens Bluff about 50 years ago, when the city government first began to establish law and order. Eormennoth's hatred of pirates was and is as strong as any other bronze dragon's and it wasn't long before pirates learned to give the city a wide berth. Eormennoth's first sea battle was against a large pirate ship trying to raid the city. Eormennoth's *fear* aura made short work of the crew, and the officers and spell casters aboard were all but helpless to stop him from dismasting the ship; later, it was revealed that most of the more powerful pirates thought Eormennoth was an illusion and wasted time trying to disbelieve him as he attacked.

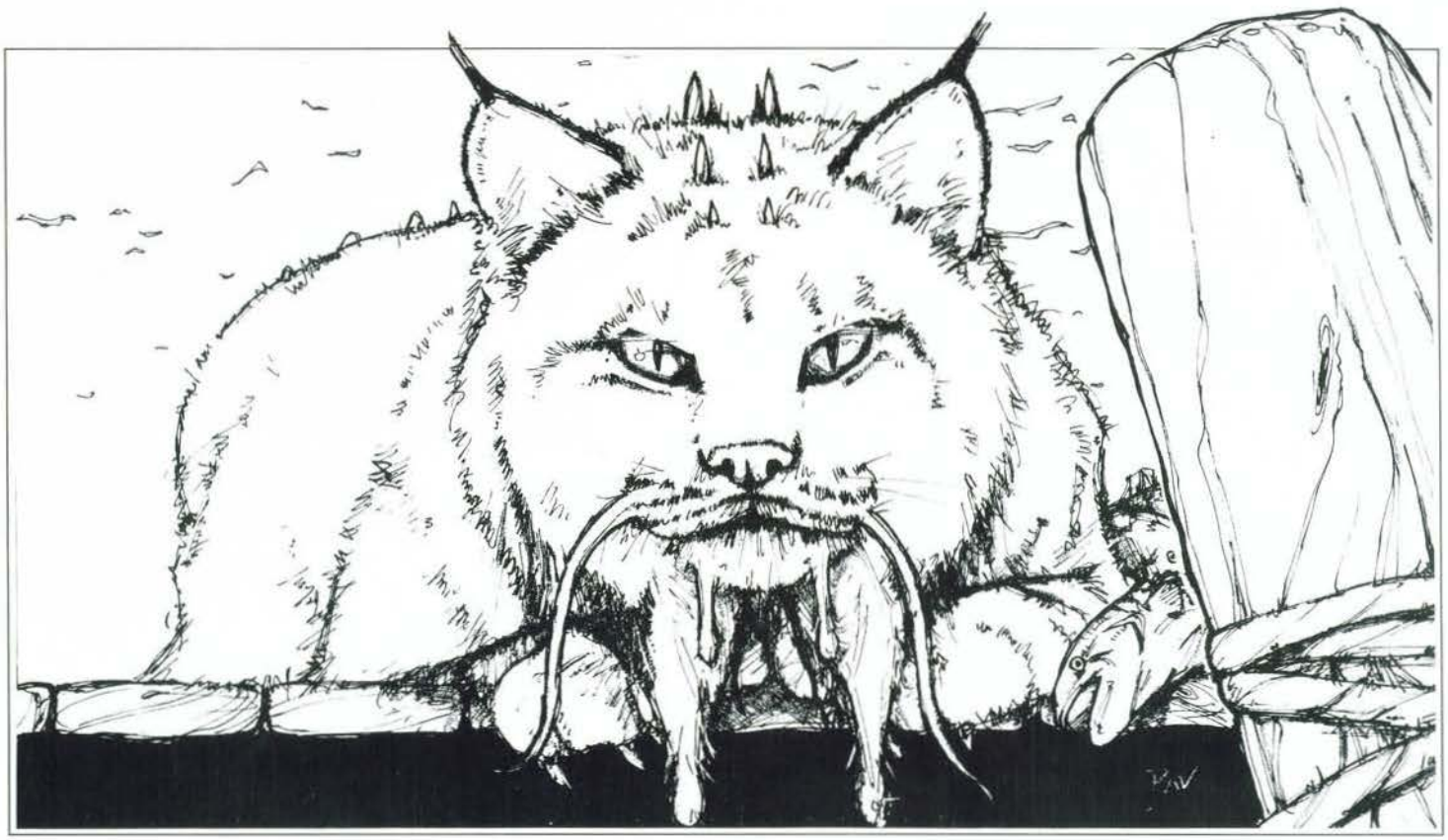
In spite of the pirates, Eormennoth tended to spend most of his time in the treasury, as he was wary of dishonest officials who might have tried to pilfer treasure. Only in the past few years has he become confident that the government can be trusted to guard his treasure while he leaves the vault.

Shortly after winning the champions games and being introduced to Eormennoth, Lord Mayor O'Kane decided to put the dragon's skills to use on the city's behalf, and to remind the pirates of the Sea of Fallen Stars just how formidable Ravens Bluff is. O'Kane carefully seeded a rumor of a super-rich cargo passing through the harbor. As O'Kane hoped, the pirates couldn't resist trying to capture it. When they moved to attack ships leaving Ravens Bluff they found themselves battling a dragon-caused storm instead. Some of the more unfortunate pirates were forced to limp into the Ravens Bluff harbor, hoping to pretend to be honest seafarers. O'Kane, however, was not fooled. The whole episode not only dealt the pirates a blow, but also generated a considerable amount of money from confiscated cargos and bounties on infamous pirates. O'Kane spilt these proceeds between Eormennoth and the city, earning him respect from both his peers and from Eormennoth.

Like most dragons, Eormennoth values privacy and has thought about finding a lair far from civilization. But he has earned a huge treasure which would be difficult to move (and there are other problems, see below). Now that Eormennoth has some faith in the city government it's hard for him to give up all those guards protecting his lair, and he has grown fond of the city's nice beach front location.

Eormennoth does enjoy watching people, and city life allows a lot of that. Eormennoth spends a lot of time *polymorphed* into a cat down at the docks, where he drinks in the sights, sounds, and smells. Kicking a cat at the docks is not a good idea, as the "cat" might kick back. Eormennoth will take nearly any shape, and any idle person or animal observing the daily life just might be him.

Eormennoth loves the sea and is frequently seen in the harbor or nearby waters, a sight that is hard on the local sea captains' nerves even though Eormennoth attacks no ship without provocation. He even leaves pirate ships alone, so long as they commit no offenses in "his" territory (which tends to expand and contract to suit Eormennoth's moods). Generally, when Eormennoth encounters pirates beyond view of Ravens Bluff he gives them an opportunity to present him with a "gift" of gems or pearls, although he once detained a particularly arrogant pirate captain for two weeks while his crew collected 10 tons of fresh shark meat (Eormennoth does have a sense of humor).



One thing Eormennoth never makes jokes about is treasure, and this eventually will become a serious problem for the city government. A great amount of the treasure in the city vault is Eormennoth's. Just how much is in dispute. Eormennoth's pay as a guard has never been precisely (or even vaguely) settled. Decades of politicians have made vague promises they had little intention of keeping. Eormennoth has interpreted these promises to be as favorable to him as possible and simply taken the money, moving it to his side of the vault.

Arguing with a dragon about money is dangerous at best and the argument is now seriously confused. Lord Mayor O'Kane himself was unaware of the disagreement for several years, as he thought Eormennoth was simply an unpaid squatter living in the vault. Vernon Condor first brought the problem to the Lord Mayor's attention.

Condor, a stickler for monetary details, located a few old records that alerted him to the situation. Once he understood the difficulty, Condor visited Eormennoth in the vault, bringing the dragon a few pearls for a snack. After three days and nights of conversation, Condor had a pretty good idea of how much money the dragon was claiming, which was enough to bankrupt the city in a hundred years or so.

Since the money was still in the vault, O'Kane's and Condor's predecessors routinely decided to leave the problem to the next generation. This inaction did not suit either O'Kane or Condor, and the pair decided to do something. But many, especially those with elven blood, argued that problem would solve itself. "The dragon is already old," went the argument. "And while he might live another 1,000 years and become a great wyrm, he might also die of natural causes tomorrow, allowing the government to grab all the loot. Why not try to outlive the dragon?" asked the elves. After all, beings come and go, but cities can last for millennia.

O'Kane and Condor ignored the elves and decided to move carefully. Condor is busy collecting all the city tax records he can, and regularly visits Eormennoth in the vault and accompanies him during his perambulations around the city. Ostensibly, this is so Eormennoth can regale Condor with tales of his exploits, but Condor really is learning exactly how much of his own treasure the dragon has stored in the vault. Eventually, Condor and O'Kane will present an accounting to Eormennoth detailing what is the dragon's and what is the city's. They hope to compromise on any disputed amounts, and establish an official rate of pay for the dragon. Condor believes that this might lead Eormennoth to relocate elsewhere, and has proposed a one-time "dragon tax" to cover the huge expense of paying off Eormennoth if he leaves. For his part, O'Kane hopes the negotiations will proceed without acrimony, but has secured both a *cube of force* and a *long sword, +2 dragonslayer.* This weapon is Lawful Neutral and is attuned to bronze dragons (+4 combat bonus and triple damage). O'Kane has no intention of slaying Eormennoth, but if he and Condor cannot persuade the dragon to be reasonable, there will be a fight.

Unknown to either O'Kane or Condor, Eormennoth has decided it is high time he raised a family. Eormennoth is correctly confident any number of female dragons will be charmed by his sophistication, his looks, and his treasure. After all, what dragon lass can resist a name like Eormennoth? (which means "immense treasure" in bronze dragon). Within a year, the Living City will be invaded by up to a dozen female bronze dragons of all ages.

This will provoke a crisis for the government. The real problem is after Eormennoth chooses a bride.

Eormennoth, like most dragons his age, will become irritated with his mate's constant hints that she deserves more treasure, and once the eggs are laid, he will "persuade" her to leave. However, he also will give her a parting gift. Not as much as she will want of course, but it will be money the government regards as its own. And when the eggs hatch, Eormennoth will have successors, ending the hope that the problem will go away when Eormennoth dies. For that matter, Eormennoth intends to be a good father, and will want to make contributions to each offspring's starting hoard.

O'Kane and Condor are planning to deal with Eormennoth some time during the next five years, and will be caught off guard when he starts courting. Prospects for adventure will abound, as the government tries to deal with the problem.

- Vernon Condor needs to recover old records from an outlying estate, sunken ship, or another government. The PCs must locate the records and return to the city with them.
- Vernon Condor might wish to locate one or more witnesses from the time Eormennoth arrived in the city, fought pirates, or foiled a robbery attempt. A witness might be a very old human or a demi-human who passed through the city. Some witnesses might be ex-pirates or still be criminals. The PCs must locate the witnesses and persuade them to return quickly to Ravens Bluff.
- Lord Marshal Gaius Varro might wish to recruit PCs to form a "dragon patrol" which is charged with preventing Eormennoth's offspring from harming property and citizens. The PCs would have to accomplish all their actions with a minimum of violence and aggression.
- In the process of studying the city, Eormennoth has learned that guildmaster Kothonos was once a pirate captain and there is still a price on his head. Despite the money, Eormennoth has not turned him in, believing Kothonos has reformed, or at least has not violated any city law about piracy. Kothonos is more than a little nervous when he learns his life depends on the generosity of a greedy dragon. The PCs might find themselves on either side of this adventure.
- Eormennoth would like to know the secrets of those in government who could favor him in the dispute. Eormennoth has never learned enough deep dark secrets to sway the government, but he keeps trying and anyone gossiping about the powers that be may just be heard by some very large and interested ears. Alternately, Eormennoth might hire one or more PCs to gather information for him. If he learns about O'Kane's *cube of force* and long sword, he might hire the PCs to deliver them to him.

❑

With Great Power

Continued from page 2

awakened on the night she disappeared by a flapping, airborne shape outside her tower window. The heroes have also discovered the body of one of the count's guards with his throat ripped out and minus some blood.

Does it sound like the work of an undead, blood-sucking fiend to you? I hope so, that was my intention. However, as my players will have discovered by the time this sees print, the force behind the murders and abduction is not a vampire, but an entire family of shape-changing werebats who like the taste of human blood and have a grudge against the count's family. These creatures have many of a vampire's abilities (flight, super strength, can take the shape of a bat, etc.), but none of a vampire's weaknesses. I am really looking forward to the expressions on my players' faces when they finally enter the creatures' lair and discover what I just told you. (Heh, heh, heh, he chuckled evilly.)

Making it happen

To make the best use of the concepts listed above, the GM has to be prepared ahead of time. They do not address how to run a good horror game session once you're sitting at the game table. Here are few brief thoughts:

Describe, don't tell: Instead of merely listing the contents of a room, treasure chest, etc., describe the scene. Use all five senses to convey the PCs' impressions of their surroundings. Describe not just what they see, but what they smell, hear, feel, and taste. Think of your Mom's kitchen in the house where you grew up. Do you remember any aromas? Do any the flavors of any foods come to mind? Remember that when you describe the kitchen of one your heroes' mothers.

Build suspense—slowly: Fear should start small, and build slowly through the course of the game. Don't beat your PC heroes over the heads with unimaginable horror after horrendous atrocity. For fear to last, it has to be subtle. Do not go overboard. Start with something modest, an unidentified, small red stain on the carpet. It could tomato juice, or is it . . . ? Also, avoid becoming gory. Gore is shocking, not scary, and there is a difference. After the initial surprise, the shock is over. Fear should last.

Control results, not actions: Never take the direct control of a PC away from his player. If you do that, the player is now detached from the character, and cares less about him. Any fear you may have built up will be lost. Always let players try to think their way out of the traps and horrors you set for them, just manipulate the results of those actions if you must do so to maintain the fear in the scenario. This point goes hand-in-hand with my last piece of advice.

Fear, not frustration: Keep in mind that when you mess with your players' PCs, they may become frustrated. That is not your goal. You want to frighten them, not anger them. Don't be too heavy-handed with your horror, especially if your players are not expecting it. Also, be aware that an occasional break in the tension is necessary. A session of nonstop gloom and terror is no fun for anybody. Allow the players to relax and their PCs to feel safe once in a while. Allow them some successes—fighting an invincible engine of destruction and mayhem gets dull very quickly.

If you're careful and patient with these techniques, your players will be frightened long before they realize you're doing it on purpose. Then spring the really nasty stuff on them—and enjoy.

For other sources of horrific inspiration, see this column in issue #66. If you have any comments or questions regarding this column and what you want to see discussed here in the future, write to **With Great Power,** c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva WI 53147. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

❑

Chapter the Third
In a world not his own Blackacre's greatest defender finds himself before a tribunal Lex permits two who speak the language strange of those who hold him captive to aid him in his fight for freedom . . .
—Excerpted from The Blackacre Enchiridion
WOLFF & BYRD
COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE
by Batton Lash
STATE v. LEX OF BLACKACRE - YOU GALLOPED IN THIS COURTHOUSE ON A HORSE WITHOUT A LICENSE, RECKLESSLY ENDANGERED OTHERS AND RESISTED ARREST. HOW DOES THE DEFENDANT PLEAD?
THE DEFENDANT PLEADS NOT GUILTY, YOUR HONOR
SCREECH!
OOPS!
DON'T LOSE THAT, DAVEY!
The Blackacre Enchiridion
THUNK!
NOW, REGARDING THE DEFENDANT'S STATUS OF RELEASE—
YOUR HONOR-
HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH COURT-ROOM LEX IS IN?
LOOK FOR THE ONE WITH THE SEVEN FOOT CELTIC WARRIOR STANDING BEFORE A JUDGE
THIS IS IT...
GASP! LOOK AT HIM!
SSSHH!
...THE STATE REQUESTS THE DEFENDANT BE PLACED UNDER PSYCHIATRIC OBSERVATION
COUNSEL BYRD...
WHAT FATE BEFELL MY TRUSTED STEED?
DON'T WORRY, LEX, THE POLICE MOUNTED UNIT IS LOOKING AFTER HIM.
YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENT HAS EVERY INTENTION OF HONORING THE TERMS OF HIS RELEASE. HE SUFFERS CULTURE SHOCK FROM BEING BROUGHT INTO OUR DIMENSION BEYOND HIS CONTROL
FRANKLY, THE JUDGE IS BIASED BECAUSE THE COURTHOUSE SMELLS LIKE A STABLE
THE DEFENDANT IS A THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY. HIS COUNSEL SAYS HE HAS NO TIES TO THIS DIMENSION. HE ACTS LIKE HE HAS NO TIES TO REALITY
MS. WOLFF, MR. LARSON, APPROACH THE BENCH
I'M WARNING THE BOTH OF YOU — ESPECIALLY YOU, MS. WOLFF - THIS COURT IS NOT GOING TO BE TURNED INTO A SIDESHOW. I HAVE A FULL CALENDAR
TOO MUCH TALK! WE COULD BE OLD AND FEEBLE BEFORE THIS IS RESOLVED.
WELCOME TO OUR WORLD, LEX
© 1992 BATTON LASH
MY PARTNER IS TRYING TO GET YOU RELEASED ON YOUR OWN RECOGNIZANCE - NOT THAT YOU'LL RECOGNIZE ANYTHING ONCE YOU'RE RELEASED
I WOULD KNOW THE HIGH POWERS IF THEY APPEARED
THEY BROUGHT ME HERE FOR A PURPOSE. MY DESTINY LIES IN THEIR HANDS. IF ONLY—
MS. WOLFF! TELL YOUR CLIENT TO SIT DOWN. THIS AIN'T NO WALKING TOUR!
BYRD! WHAT—?
WOLFF, MEET LEX'S AMICI CURIAE!
I WAIT FOR YOUR COMMANDS, O WISE HIGH POWERS
WAY COOL!!
NEXT: CON-TINUANCE

Classifieds

United Kingdom (England): Looking for players, DMs, or game clubs for either version of the AD&D® game in the Lancashire area. Please contact: Richard Wareing, 31 Warbreck Ave., Aintree, Liverpool, Merseyside, England L9 4RL; (051)521-7700.

California: Player turned DM looking for gamers age 14-17, male or female, in the Long Beach-Oceanside area. If you are serious, mature, and play the AD&D game, GURPS, the D&D® game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, Ars Magica, Star Wars, or Vampire I'd like to hear from you. No experience required, but please bring your own materials. Jesse McCullough (516)437-7498.

California: I'm a 13-year-old looking for gamers in the following areas: Plymouth, Sutter Creek, Jackson, Ione, and Amador City. Please contact: Jack Pulones, 14880 Barney Rd., Plymouth, CA 95669; (209)245-5683.

California: The Dragon Club of Southern California is looking for members. We play the AD&D 2nd edition game in its various settings. We also play Call of Cthulhu, Aliens, and others. There are no fees or dues, but you must be 18 or older to join. For more information contact: The Dragon Club of So. Calif., 1200 E Adul St., West Covina, CA 91792; (818)336-1694 (ask for Wayne).

Illinois/Indiana: I am a 23-year-old interested in joining a role playing group. I am familiar with many games. I'll play just about anything. If you play in the south suburbs of Chicago or in extreme northwest Indiana and are willing to take in a new player, please call Christopher Jones (219)845-9609.

Indiana: Indy couple looking for other role players for AD&D game adventures. We would like to play weekly. Experience is unimportant–we can play at any level. Contact: Michael & Dan, 3614 Luewan Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46236 or call (317)897-8661. (We are a gay couple.)

Indiana: Looking for members in the south-central area. Experience preferred but not necessary in Tbon, the AD&D game, D&D game, Battletech, Star Fleet Battles, and Car Wars. Also, I'm looking for both of the old RAVENLOFT® setting modules, Greyhawk Ruins, Vecna Lives!, DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ cyclopedia with the "missing" mythoi, 30-side die books, and Star Wars spaceship miniatures. I also need a place to play regularly. Send a list and SASE to: Doug A. Weddle, 640 E 300 N, Seymour, IN 47274.

Indiana: I just moved to Indinapolis and I need to find AD&D 2nd edition game players befor rigor mortis sets in. I'm interested in alternating as a player and DM with a dependable group. Please save me before I wither. Damon Smithwick, 7345 Merganser Dr. #C, Indianapolis, IN 46260 or leave a message at (317)255-5792.

Massachusetts: The Game Masters Role Playing Organization is looking for members near Northridge in the Blackstone Valley area. For details and an application form write: Chris Kaminski. P.O. Box 596, Linwood, MA 01525.

Michigan: I am a 21-year-old player/DM looking for a Network club or any gaming group in Metro Detroit. I play the AD&D 2nd edition game, the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, Battletech, Champions, and Car Wars. Please call or write: Kevin Doute, 1426 Russel, Lincoln Park, MI 48146; (313)382-6491 (after 5 pm).

Nevada: We're looking for Network members in the Reno/Sparks/Carson area for the newly forming Goblyn Flux game club. Our specialties are Champions, Fantasy Hero, GURPS, and the D&D game. Contact: Alex Markley (702)746-0215.

New Jersey: Seeking new members for a role playing game club in southern New Jersey. The club has male and female members aged 15-19. We play the AD&D game, Torg, Space 1889, and Warhammer. Anyone who feels comfortable playing with us is welcome. We will teach anyone games they don't know. Call: (609)693-7365, ask for Rob (feel free to call collect).

New York: I am an experienced, 28-year-old DM starting an AD&D 2nd edition game campaign in November. I need a couple of experienced, mature players willing to regularly commit one Saturday a month and willing to come to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Drop me a note with a phone number if you're interested. Peter Venetoklis, 651 Broadway, Bethpage, NY 11714.

Ohio (Northwest): Highly experienced game master and player looking for a new fantasy game group within driving distance of Port Clinton. I'm interested in any type of game. I run and play Shadowrun, Call of Cthulhu, the AD&D game, Battletech, the TOP SECRET® game, and many others. I prefer mature or at least intelligent players. I dislike hack-n-slash. I can play as often as once a week or as little as once a month. Please contact: Chandler R. Chapman, 600 Jackson Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452.

Pennsylvania: AD&D game player needed to play on Friday and Saturday nights. Must be 14 or older. Experience preferred. Interest in occasionally playing SF and super hero role playing games desired. Please call Tim Lauchnor in East Greenville at (215)679-2922 (after 6 pm on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Saturday).

General: *For sale:* Many war games, SF and Fantasy RPGs and board games. Titles by TSR, Inc., SPI, and others. For a complete list, send a SASE to: Bob Provencher, 1003 Commons, East Brunswick, NJ 08816.

General: All GMs and game writers are invited to contact The Grand Campaign. We are not a club, but a group of writers trying to help each other produce and submit materials to our favorite game companies and magazines. We are assembling a compendium of writers and submission guidelines; if you have a magazine or newsletter we'd like to see your writing guidelines and a sample of your publication. For information about our activities, send a SASE to: Donald G. Dennis, 11001 Magnolia Park, Oklahoma City, OK 73120.

General: *For Sale:* Assorted, new and used merchandise for the D&D game and AD&D game. Send a SASE for a list. Also, I am a big SF fan and I'm looking for figures, pictures, and just about anything else for Star Trek, Star Wars, and possibly other SF subjects, new or used. Tell me what you have and how much you want for it. Peter J Pochylski, 144 Nevins Street, Dunkirk, NY 14048.

General: I'm looking for a copy of MA3, The Ultimate Powers Book for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game in good to near mint condition. Call me and we'll discuss price. Jesse McCullough (516)437-7498.

General: I am interested in starting a gamer's newsletter. I'm accepting submissions for possible publication. I'm offering no money, but will personally acknowledge all submissions and will give credit to the author for anything printed. I'm interested in NPCs, new spells, unique weapons, character kits, modules, and monsters. Please contact: Michael Mockus, 2285 Islander Ct., Palm Harbor, FL 34683.

General: GMs needed to run games and tournaments at Wyvercon '93 in Mt. Vernon, WA. Any and all games welcome—we have 30,000 square feet to fill. Convention dates are June 18-20, 1993. Please contact: Wyvercon '93, P.O. Box 2325, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273.

General: I'm looking for the following FORGOTTEN REALMS accessories: FR1, FR3, FR4, FR6, TM4, REF4, I14, and H4 (Throne of Bloodstone). I'll buy other FORGOTTEN REALMS materials I don't have. Richard M. Strauss. P.O. Box 318, Nome, TX 77629.

General: I'm looking for a copy of the Manual of The Planes and a Kara-Tur boxed set, preferably in good condition. If you're selling these or other AD&D game materials, send me a list. I'm also looking for someone to help me learn the Runequest game. Please write: Chris Kaminski. P.O. Box 596, Linwood, MA 01525.

General: I seek information on low cost (free would be best) and human moderated play-by-mail role playing games. I'll take any fantasy or science fiction game system, but would prefer the AD&D 2nd edition game or Tunnels & Trolls 5th edition. Also, does anyone out there have the maps and clues to Infocom's Zork III for sale? Please write: Glenn C. Parks, #516 Washington Gardens, Washington, NJ 07882.

Trading Cards: *To trade:* All 1991 Series II cards except 722 for 1991 Series I. Also, high-number 1992 Series I to trade for other high-number Series I. Please contact: Howie Dawson, Jr., 938 Hampton Rd., Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236; (313)885-0705.

Trading Cards: *To trade or sell:* Most of the new 1992 cards. Send a list of wants and a SASE. I also have some 1991 Series I cards to trade. Scott Lehman, 399 Cross Pond Rd., Pound Ridge, NY 10576.

Conventions

Chili Con Carnage, October 23-25
Dallas, TX
Come to the Parkway Hilton—(800)356-3924. Features include guests, panels, art show, masquerade, dance, filk concert, videos, animé, and gaming. AD&D® game, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun, Torg, DC Heroes, Champions, Warhammer 40K, Battletech, and more. For special airline rates, call World-wide Travel, Inc., (800)421-7757, be sure to mention Chili Con Carnage. For convention information write: John Manning, 4828 Alcott #102, Dallas, TX 75204.

Star Con 92, October 31-November 1
Neenah, WI
Join us at Union Station, 157 S. Green Bay Rd. in Neenah for gaming, a costume contest, art show, special guests, dealers, and a miniatures contest. For more information call (414)722-6448 or (414)725-2555 or write: Star Con 92, 112 N. Lake St., Neenah, WI 54956.

ShaunCon V, November 6-8
Kansas City, MO
The Role-Players Guild of Kansas City invites you to the Roadway Inn at 6th & Main. Events include an AD&D game Grand Masters, Torg Masters, Champions, Star Wars, Shadowrun, Paranoia, Vampire and Star Trek. Board games will include Advanced Civilization, Supremacy, Diplomacy, and others. There will be dealers, a painted miniatures contest, and seminars. For information write: The Role-Players Guild of Kansas City, c/o ShaunCon V, P.O. Box 7457, Kansas City, MO 64116, or call (816)455-5020 (24 hours a day).

Command Con 4, November 7
Saint Louis, MO
This convention features G.O.H Lester Smith. There will be miniatures, board games, and role playing events. Pre-registration is $5 and there are no event fees. Come meet us in Saint Louis. For information or to pre-register write: Command Con 4, P.O. Box 9107, Saint Louis, MO 63117.

Rock-Con, November 7-8
Rockford, IL
This event features guests Darwin Bromley, Jim Ward, John Olson, and Lou Zocchi. There will be a silent auction and 40 dealers. Gaming will include the 1992 international Empire Builder tournament, a Network benefit event, board games, miniatures, and role playing. Admission is $5.00 for the weekend. For information write: Rock-Con Game Fair. 14225 Hansberry Rd., Rockton, IL 61072.

Penta Con VIII, November 14-15
Fort Wayne, IN
Join us at the Grand Wayne Center in downtown Fort Wayne. Features include a Network AD&D game tournament, numerous board games, miniatures battles, role playing games, dealers' area, painting and costume contests, SCA demos, and door prizes. Sell your used games at our flea market. For more information, contact: Steve Smith, 836 Himes St., Huntington, IN 46750; (219)356-4209.

CONTRARY '92, November 13-15
West Springfield, MA
The convention site is the Ramada Hotel at 1080 Riverdale St. (Rt. 5 South) in West Springfield. Guest of honor is R.A. Salvatore. There will be many Network events and miniatures events. Other gaming includes Battletech, Warhammer fantasy, and Warhammer 40K. There will be classic board games and a charity miniatures painting contest. Pre-registration is encouraged and costs $17 before November 4th. For information, contact: CONTRARY '92, c/o Dragon's Lair, 626 North Main St., East Longmeadow, MA 01028; (413)731-7237.

COCOACON '92, November 27-29
Harrisburg, PA
This convention is sponsored by Pastimes Hobby and the Fantasy Fortress Gaming Club. Features include Network tournaments, a miniatures painting contest, a dealers' area, and 24-hour open gaming. Events include the AD&D game, Advanced Squad Leader, Battletech, Shadowrun, the BOOT HILL® game, Silent Death, Vampire, Circus Maximus, Kingmaker, Tales from the Floating Vagabond, and more. Pre-registration before November 10th is $9. Write: COCOACON '92, 210 South Grant St., Palmyra, PA 17078 or call evenings at (717)838-9502 or (717)838-9784.

Endless Con I, November 28
Leavenworth, KS
Our site is the Ramada Inn, 3rd & Delaware, in Leavenworth. Our schedule includes three-round feature and benefit tournaments for the AD&D game. One-round events include the BOOT HILL game, Cyberpunk, RAVENLOFT® game, Shadowrun. TOP SECRET® game, Twilight 2,000 and Mechwarrior. There also will be a dealers area and a miniatures painting contest. For more information send a SASE to: Endless Con I, c/o Bill Bailey, 512 S. 9th. Leavenworth, KS 66048.

Concoction '92, December 4-6
Atlantic City, NJ
The Quality Inn on South Carolina and Pacific Ave. in Atlantic City will be the site for this extravaganza of gaming, contests, and vendors. Events include Network tournaments, an official Car Wars tournament, and the final rounds of the New Jersey role playing challenge. Other features include miniature and costume contests, a game auction, and more. Pre-registration is $8 a day, $17 for the weekend. Discounts are available to groups and to members of the RPGA™ Network and the SCA. Concoction '92, P.O. Box 222, Oceanville, NJ 08231; (609)272-1157.

Constitution, January 29-31
Arlington, VA
This new convention in the mid-Atlantic region will be held at the Quality Inn in Arlington. Among the scheduled events are Network Feature, Benefit, Masters, and Grand Masters tournaments. Game systems will include the AD&D game, the DARK SUN™ setting, Shadowrun, Timemaster, Paranoia, Call of Cthulhu, and Champions. There also will be non-Network events, dealers, and an interactive role-playing game. DM G.O.H. is Jay Tummelson. For information write: Constitution, 1737 Section Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 or call (703)522-4903.

Orccon 16, February 12-15
Los Angeles, CA
All types of family, strategy, board, role playing, and miniatures games will be offered, including Network tournaments. Hunt for bargains at the flea market, auction, and exhibit area. There will be seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Contact: Strategicon, P.O. Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849 or call (310)326-9440 for more details.

Total Confusion VII, February 26-28
Marlborough, MA
The site for this convention is the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Rd. in Marlborough. Scheduled events include the AD&D game, GURPS, Battletech, Warhammer, Space Hulk, Diplomacy, Champions, Call of Cthulhu, Car Wars, and Axis & Allies. Highlights include Network events, a miniatures painting contest and our annual costume contest. Pre-registration is $9 a day or $23 for all three days. For information and a pre-registration package please write: The Total Confusion Convention, P.O. Box 1463, Worcester, MA 01607 or call (508)987-1530. For hotel reservations, call (508)460-0700.

Demi-Con IV, March 26-28
Des Moines, IA
This SF fan convention features guests Mickey Zucker Reichert, Erin, McKee, and Mark Moore. The Adventurers of Central Iowa, a Network club, will sponsor all gaming–GMs needed. For pre-registration information and a game schedule contact: The Adventurers of Central Iowa, 1304 Boyd, Des Moines, IA 50316; (515)266-2358.

This Just In

Tournament results for the following conventions were recorded at HQ between June 1st and August 10th, 1992:

AU Gamers Con 3	Cape Con
Capital Con 8	Chimera Con 8
Circle of Swords	Club Meeting
Conn Con 92	Continuity 92
Con West 92	Cube Con
Dun Dra Con	Egyptian Campaign 92
Eve Con	Gamex 92
Gamescaucus	Games Day 7
Glathricon	Green Con
Impact 1.6	Kubla Con
Michicon	M.O.C.
Nova 17	Orc Con
Point Con	Scry Con 92
Ville Con	Winter Con

If you played a Network event that is not on this list, check with the convention organizer to see if the results have been forwarded to HQ. Note that literally hundreds of conventions run before June, 1992 do not appear on this list. Since the Network tournament program has been up and running for more than a decade, it would be impossible to list them all here. Note also that conventions run in **Europe** and **Australia** don not appear on this list.

BLOODMOOSE™ AND COMPANY

by Gary M. Williams © 1991

WE'VE BEEN HYAR PERT'NEER UH MONTH NOW! AIN'T SEEN HARDLY NOBODY! SURE'UH LIKE T' KNOW WHEN THEY'RE UH FIGURIN' ON LETTIN US OUTTA THIS HYAR PLACE!

MY ESKUPADE!?! I DUN TOLT YEW UH HUNNERT TIMES, IT WUZ NUTHIN' MORE 'N' UH AX'DENT!
WELL! IF YOU HAD A LITTLE MORE SELF-CONTROL... EH? HULLO... WHAT'S THAT?
tap·tap·tappity·tap·

WELLLL.... I GUESS I SHOULD GET BACK TO MY LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT...
Y'ALL'D BEST DO SUM STUDY'N ON YER MORSE CODE WHILST YA AT IT TOO...
GARY M. WILLIAMS ©1991
·tap·tap·tappity·tap·

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Issue #76, *Featuring*

- **The Valley of Death**
  Confront the sinister Death Master in his lair—if he exists.

- **The Living City**
  Find out why Ravens Bluff is an unhealthy place for pirates and people who are unkind to stray cats.

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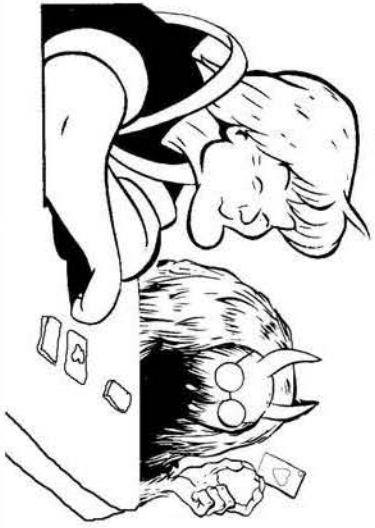

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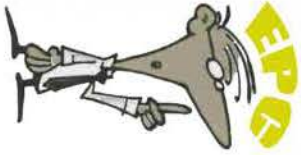

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